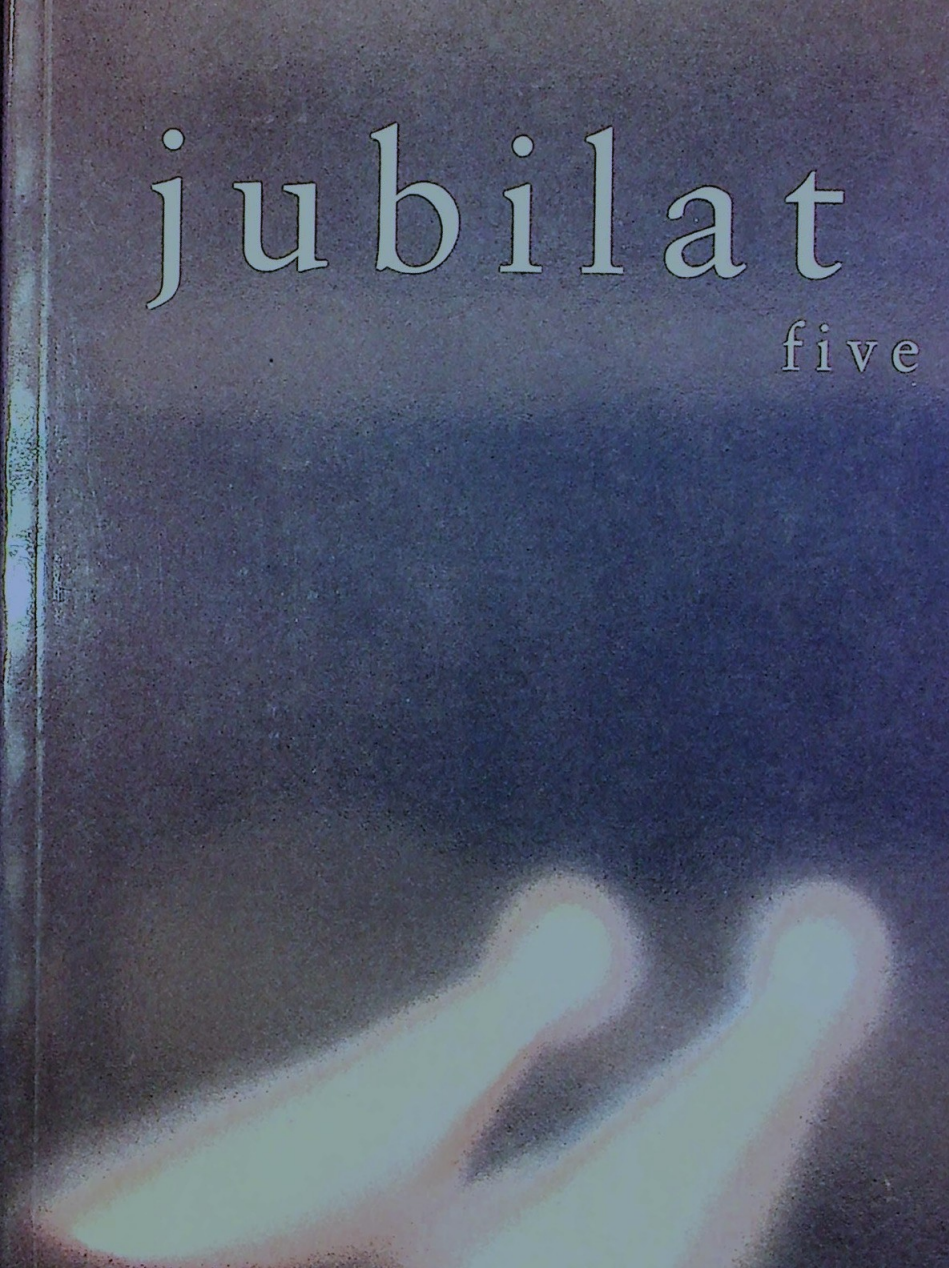


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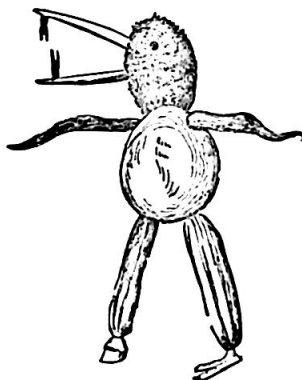
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JEFF HILLIARD & NINA SWIFT

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JOY

Henry Vaughan

Be dumb coarse measures, jar no more; to me
There is no discord, but your harmony.
False, juggling sounds; a groan well dressed, where care
Moves in disguise, and sighs afflict the air:
Sorrows in white; griefs tuned; a sugared dosis
Of wormwood, and a death's-head crowned with roses.
He weighs not your forced accents, who can have
A lesson played him by a wind or wave.
Such numbers tell their days, whose spirits be
Lulled by those charmers to a lethargy.

But as for thee, whose faults long since require
More eyes than stars; whose breath could it aspire
To equal winds: would prove too short: thou hast
Another mirth, a mirth though overcast
With clouds and rain, yet full as calm and fine
As those *clear heights* which above tempests shine.

Therefore while the various showers
Kill and cure the tender flowers
While the winds refresh the year
Now with clouds, now making clear,
Be sure under pains of death
To ply both thine eyes and breath.

As leaves in bowers
Whisper their hours
And hermit-wells
Drop in their cells:

So in sights and unseen tears
Pass thy solitary years,
And going hence, leave written on some tree,
Sighs make joy sure, and shaking fastens thee.

THE WILD TURKEY

James Tate

I was standing at the kitchen sink washing a few dishes, when I heard this knocking at my door. I looked out the window, but there was no one there. But the knocking continued. I looked down, and there was this wild turkey staring at me. He must have been about four feet tall, and he was looking right into my eyes. Then he pecked at the door again, and I instinctively opened it. He walked into the middle of the room and said, "Gobble gobble gobble." I poured him a bowl of dry cereal and another bowl of water. He tried the cereal and seemed to like it. He'd take four or five bites, and then wash it all down with a couple of sips of water. Then he'd look up at me with his blue head and his red and white mottled neck. He finished the cereal, then flapped his great wings as if to thank me. His green iridescent feathers glazed the room in a magical light. I walked into the living room, and he followed me. I sat down in my chair, and he leapt up on the back of the couch. He had the meekest, almost beseeching eyes, that seemed to say, "Whatever you want to do next is fine by me. I'm your guest, after all, and we've only just met, though I feel like I've known you for a lifetime, old friend, new friend, good friend." "Gobble gobble gobble," I said. He didn't reply, but turned his head away and stared at the TV, which was off. We sat there

in silence for a good long time. Sometimes our eyes met, and we'd wander down those ancient hallways, a little afraid, a little in awe. And then we'd turn away having reached a locked door. He studied the room, too, for any clue, but it must have all seemed so alien, the beautiful vases and bowls, the paintings, scraps of a lost civilization. Hours passed like this. I felt an immense calm within me. We were sleeping in a tree on an island in an unknown land.

THE HARP

An angel was playing a harp outside of Antonio's pizzeria. I was already late to meet Walter Culligan, and he was the man who was going to make me rich within ten years. Other people had stopped and were listening to her. They all had these dreamy smiles on their faces. The angel stroked the harp with her long, white arms as if she were kneading their souls. She knew how good it made them feel, and this brought her great pleasure, you could tell. The music was like nothing I had ever heard before. It rose and fell and swirled and zigzagged, always with silence in its heart, and eternity stitched through every note. I had to ask myself what she was doing here, but, then, I didn't really need an answer. More and more people had gathered. The astonishment of sudden joy kept all lips sealed. The angel's arms were swimming wildly over the strings. I couldn't think. I couldn't even remember my own name, but I was happy, if that was the right word, in a way I had never been before. Of course, I was in love with her. I would have given anything to be alone with her, just to hear her speak. The crowd had spilled out into the street and was blocking traffic. A mounted policeman rode up and was studying the situation, but it seems he, too, was quickly entranced. Everyone was in love with her—women, children, old men and young. "She's mine," I shouted. "The hell she is, she's mine," someone yelled. And that's when the brawl broke out. I started swinging at anyone within range. And I was getting pounded left and right and from behind. The policeman

called for help, and started bopping the good citizens of the town with his nightstick. In the midst of the chaos, I remembered my name and my appointment with Walter Culligan and my future wealth. Someone had broken my nose, and I was bleeding. I was trying to push my way through the free-for-all, when I saw that the angel had been knocked to the sidewalk. She was bruised and crying. I knew I had to save her. With a surge of strength, I threw people aside, one after another, until, at last, I grabbed her hand and pulled her up. "This happens every time," she said. "I guess I really should give it up, but I love playing that harp. And I love people. The music is meant to heal them, bring them peace. Look at you, you're bleeding." She had a deep, gravelly voice, like a barroom angel, not an angel angel. "Well, maybe it was more peace than we could stand," I said. The police had dispersed the crowd by now. The harp stood by itself undamaged. "My granddaddy gave me that harp," she said. "Ain't it beautiful." "It's like a golden ship of light," I said.

A MORE PROSPEROUS NATION

When I went out to weed my garden, I found a wild baby in it. It snarled at me, and I ran. I had read that they were becoming a problem in this part of the state. No one knew where they came from, but they were known to be incredibly quick and vicious. I went back in the house and locked the door. Through the kitchen window, I watched it eat a dozen tomatoes. Then it threw up, and started eating more. It was a disgusting little creature. The article I had read advised shooting them on sight "to stop the epidemic." The creature was eating my flowers by the fistful. Then it rolled around in the dirt, laughing. I dialed 911 and reported the wild baby. "Stay in your house. Do not leave your house," the woman said. Two minutes later there was a squad car in my driveway. The officers got out with their shotguns. I didn't want to watch the slaughter, so I went into the living room and picked up the paper, but of course I couldn't read. I waited tensely for the explosions. I waited and waited, but there were none. I went to the kitchen window and looked around. There were no officers in sight, and no wild baby. I walked around the house, peering through each window. Nothing, save for the police car in my driveway with its cherry light still turning. Of course I had been told not to leave the house under any circumstances, but this was too much. I didn't own a gun, so I grabbed a long, sharp kitchen knife. Near the garden, the grass was stained with blood, and there was evidence of a tremendous struggle. I was shaking as I prowled around the house. I figured the baby had eaten the

two policemen and would now be quite huge, but perhaps it would be sleepy, too, after such a giant meal. It couldn't still be hungry, or was I kidding myself? I finished circling the house without incident. The officers were sitting on my door stoop having a smoke. "I thought the thing had eaten both of you," I said. "Nice place you've got here," one of them said. "That wasn't a real wild baby," the other one said. "That was just a baby someone didn't want. They're a dime a dozen. Most of them learn to get by on their own, but, of course, some don't make it." "What about the blood in the yard?" I said. "It took a bite out of my ankle, nothing serious," he said. "And where did it go?" I asked. "It was too fast. We didn't see where it went. It will probably be back, but it's nothing to worry about," he said. "But it's my home," I said. "I need to feel safe, my garden." "Share the bounty," the first officer said. "You've got plenty to go around. They're only babies, you know."

from THE BOOK OF EDGAR

Corey Mead

13. THE DUEL

of pearls

In the grass he placed a string

one by one as one
gray-lidded eye

Edgar shot them

in formation.

A bitter cinnamon scent
which covers the city of an afternoon.

One hour from
Weehawken

he drew

a comet with a lion's tale.

These are lines from a Communist-era Polish song
Edgar sang
from the train. He invented another

cheering crowd,

the twenty-third tentacle from the sun

"Dear Anna,
Your benign person

is here."

14. MEMORIES OF JAPAN

At which dream has Edgar arrived—
mouth filled with coal, a trowel

over his shoulder, skylarks

perched on the Emperor's shed?

The first of such evenings
as would make his heart burst

black wool
mixed with clay

and want the inhuman summer instead.

In a palace lighted by paper lanterns,
a single transgression

Edgar denied

by nation,

by rodent accomplice,
Anna slept,

a diamond on her tongue.

MOUNT ETNA

Samantha Hunt

A below, below any hospital looks like a tunnel fasted by an engineer who had to cancel his dates. The vacuum down there snips di from urnal because it is a freeway for the chase scenes of only dead people. "Stop thief! That's my last breath." They never catch up.

At a monthly meeting these secret tunnels get together with other union members. The Local. In a hotel banquet room or in the cretaceous bedrock, some very large convention hall that has no walls so that secret tunnel can pass through secret tunnel can pass through secret tunnel. The hospital belows, ant farms, fiber optic cables, large intestines, even the spoon-fed efforts of escaped cons chat but feel inadequate because there is an Italian by the buffet, a non-local. She is the lava caves that know Mount Etna's molten biblically. Etna makes the other passageways tremble in nervous conversation. Start and finish time with judgement, speak only of other tunnels, say cruel things like *Humpf. When was the last time she erupted?*

The tunnels are so jealous they fill up on dumb snacks without one kind word to Etna. She leaves lava on a hanky in the ladies room. I think she is not inclined to others anyway. She is closer to the Union's original impetus: secrets. She makes a case, recall our mission statement! "I've got a secret," she whispers. They try to guess but they are impatient to return to their hiding places. "Give us a hint." So she does, "It's orange, pink, blue, black." No one guesses and that was an easy one. *Eruzione!* An Italian revolution though color is no secret. Her real secret is the number, in degrees that makes rock turn red. I'd like to know that secret.

I am jealous of even the lowliest secret tunnel. They are so much lower than me. They are so much more secret too. And still beyond and even exceeding these excellent qualifications for envy, secret tunnels get to spend a life or seven lives without ever being discovered by the non-dead. Footsteps approach but footsteps rarely find the hidden panel, the false boulder, the underground stream that floods with secret tunnel adrenaline when, for a moment, after centuries of moments, the tunnel believes it is about to be caught in the tunnel act. I am jealous of that hard flood. And then it is not caught. And then it can return to sniffing the dark dirt or attic air pushing just outside its walls.

I am in a hospital while I write this. I myself am full of secret tunnels. One begins at my belly button and houses a camera I can't see. "Think of a vacation spot," the anesthesiologist advises but before the slopes of the volcano even come to mind I have fallen. The anesthesiologist offers me a mint—two and one half hours for a moment of experiencing real death, not dreaming, real blackness, not caves. I take it.

Etna came to my bedside while I was knocked out cold. She was hot. I wouldn't have known she'd been here but she left marks where she touched me. She said, "Your father has been vacationing with me." But vacation in a volcano sounds like hell. He might be in Italy but he's not in hell. She was lying. The way people lie in hospitals. She petted my hand, "You look a lot better." The way people lie in hospitals. After a few hours of the silent treatment, I'm unconscious, for someone's sake, Etna felt guilty. "I didn't mean to ruin the little town," she said.

The drugs wore off and all my self-deceits were dashed. There is no Union meeting for secret tunnels. It was the valium. I lied. There is no Union without walls. There is no Union. These people are alive. These people are dead. There is no Union. I lied. The way people lie in hospitals. Like this: The telephone rings and they ask for my father. It is someone who wants a

bill paid which hasn't been paid in a long, long overdue. I say I am sorry. He can't come to the phone. He is very sick. The small tubes that carry air in his lungs collapsed from the scar of tar, I say. He is so sick, I say, that he has escaped. Escaped? they say. Yes, I say and hang up like small cave in. That's how I lie, lying here in the hospital where he died five months ago. I lie like an engineer. "That ceiling will hold."

An Italian man helps me into a wheelchair. He'll push me all the way to Parking Level 2 where my car is waiting to bring me home. "We'll take the shortcut," the man says. "Excellent idea," I tell him. It is a beautiful, extremely secret passageway. It is tiled white like a hospital would do it and entirely empty. The Italian lets me enjoy it. He zigzags my wheelchair, taking in the complete breadth of the tunnel. "Why do we love secret tunnels?" I ask him. "Because they are like a woman," he says. That I know is a lie. I am a woman. There's no secret there. I suspect it is because they are as close as we come to the excitement of dying without dying. But before I can tell him this theory a mechanical door opens in front of us and closes behind us. "Do you know Mount Etna?" I ask him. He is Italian. "Yes. She smokes too much," he says. He describes how her insides are crusty with unbending creosote that squeezes each rock sack inside until it breaks its cells, stops breathing and runs rock liquid through the subterranean colony. It makes her cough productive.

Underground the parking garage is cool. The Italian wheels me to my car. "Oh, I left something behind in the room," I tell him. "Would you?" And he does. I lied. When he is gone I wheel the chair to the railing. From Level 2 I glance down the inner spiral of the ramps. It is a long way down to Level 9. I move the chair to the incline's line and give myself the smallest push forward. Down.

I know my father has a five month head start but I thought, in spelunking, I'd follow an old path to the border of escape, without escaping just to see

where he passed through, though as the chair builds speed on this down ramp, stopping seems less and less an option. I take the corners down, down and sniff the dirt just outside. It is stronger with each level gained. I am looking for the Union. There's a wall dead ahead but I am looking for the Union that has no walls.

RING ROAD

for W.G. Sebald

If I think a road back to you, I think of my hand held one inch above a train track so that each switch the lineman makes, sending someone we might know south, is recorded in my wrinkled palm. Even the discarded grocery bag trapped by a tie, first looking like a small castle made of snow or a recently one-winged kestrel or a baby, even the bag makes a notch on the line which sweeps down from pointer to divide my wrist in two.

Could one begin to think a road back to you simply because one finds a timetable, now out-of-date, more present in its past, and one recalls a white palace or a bird no longer preying or how the baby sounded when not crying?

So much thinking on this highway to make the road passable, I usually fall asleep by the side. Bicyclists pass me. One cyclist is a man named Max. He calls his broke-down machine Wobblepuss so I'm able to keep up. I run alongside giving him a wide berth to wobble in. He tells about the ship he came here aboard.

"You might not remember," he says, "the old liners. But when I first stood before the *Berengaria* I closed my eyes. From below, what started as a hum built slowly to horses, a cavalry approaching from the distance. I listened as alarm grew in me. But this alarm was rapidly drowned by a rumble large enough to swallow the phantom cavalry the way dying extinguishes the fear of death. The torrent of these great engines took up residence in the back of my head and neck, a deep freezing that convinced me this was no ship, no horse but a tremendous wind, a terrible storm built on the flawless plains, as swift and devastating as thought.

"I stepped aboard," Max said. "I came here," he said.

If I think a highway back to him I can smell turpentine and remember how, despite knowing far better, once in the woods I confused white pine resin mineral spirits with sugar maple sap. And wonder now of trees that left their mark on me to have a taste, but spit me up, momentarily having confused humans with a species that tastes far sweeter.

Sometimes there are lots of trees on the highway, debris from the Great Hurricane of 1895 which nearly destroyed the town of Dask and the Institute for Enlightenment housed there. The Institute was no more than a tabernacle of pampered dullards complaining of boredom and drinking too much as though their stiff brains were anyone else's fault. I imagine the Institute's destruction was a dark mess that caused a child standing on a nearby mountaintop to report to her parents, "Blood of the Earth's not like mine at all." In among the driftwood and debris I find their relics, luggage, bottles and one message inside from the caretaker at the Institute: *If help does not arrive soon, salvation will be beyond the power of me and 40 horses.* I cork the message up again. I am no help having been born too sensitive to word pairs such as horses plus salvation. I imagine the caretaker's burden. I blanch at his thoughts of getting home, his skills in fast fire-building and the water that stormed his call to order, raindrop by uncontrollable raindrop. There must have been millions of them washed out to sea.

I stop for the night on the road back to you.

I camp just off the way by a low lake. The lake is manmade, a field that's been flooded for colonial irrigation. Still when it is calm it is possible to detect under the water what once was a stone wall surrounding the submerged farmhouse. In the farmhouse a lady cultivator lived alone. So proficient a gardener, she was able to spend most of her days in the arm of a willow that hung low, writing verse. It is difficult not to ask who might be living

there now. Through the night, by the shores of the lake I listen for people, perhaps they will be talking in their sleeps, perhaps they'll say, "Remember when we had birds instead of fish in our trees." I hear nothing but dream. I dream a road back to you and am awakened by my fire and certain embers, squares of glowing log, cross-sections of rings from the years of civil unrest that dislodge themselves and drop to the coals below, not unlike a note played so decidedly that no reverberations are recorded and if you don't hear it, it is the same as gone.

WESTERLY

Nils Michals

What comes off the sea recalls nothing
of loving a world and for those with eyes
wishing something other than what is seen
it says: listen.

Comes off the sea and does not care, says accept
there may or may not be a hand
in this: a taste of spray,
salt, some origin no longer
encompassing us with calm, says
you are on your own now.

And the shy-grown citizens. City of harbors.

What comes off the sea has tinned the sea
wide and for miles like wheat blown one direction.

Off the sea, the distance it has glassed
faltering, comes near to ask

Who are you, and after you answer,
just sea, air,

nowhere in the giftbearing world a voice
having said salt, water—

and in not saying, not a thing we may call quiet,
no voice having sung.

14 LETTERS TO JAMES ALEXANDER

Jack Spicer

James Alexander was a young poet Spicer met in San Francisco in the fall of 1958. Later that winter, Alexander returned home to his parents in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Spicer, attracted to both the youth and his poetry, began writing these letters to continue their connection. These letters were written in 1959 as Spicer was beginning to work on his long poem Heads of the Town Up to the Aether, in which Alexander appears as a kind of beatific love figure. The second section of the poem, "A Fake Novel about the Life of Arthur Rimbaud," begins in a dead letter office. Spicer believed that letters could be poems and read them aloud to the poets at the Sunday gatherings in North Beach. Spicer died in 1965; Alexander's serial poem entitled The Jack Rabbit Poem was published by White Rabbit Press in 1966. These letters first appeared in altered form in Caterpillar 12 in 1970.

—Peter Gizzi & Kevin Killian

I

Fort Wayne, Indiana, is the capital of Nitrogen. All streets end there. No buses arrive there except those that carry direct mail or cargoes of Negroes en route on the Underground Railway. There has never been a city made up of so many arms.

You can see Troy, New York in the distance.

Christmas poems and lovers' holly branches grow there in the winter as well as stuffings of turkeys, memory pie, and little droppings of passing angels. It is not reached by air.

Fort Wayne, Indiana, has industries and tournament golf, and blocks and blocks of weeping buildings. It is built on high ground above the slough of utter unwinding.

The birds which all look like seagulls or cormorants in its artificial sky finish singing when the day is over. At night they look like elephants. People watch them with telescopes as they hover.

In Fort Wayne, Indiana the trees are dying and you can see footprints in the rather wet snow. People take their motor scooters to bed with them.

Come back to California, come back to California every map-maker, every map-maker is pleading to James Alexander.

"What do the sparrows eat in the winter?" I asked someone once in Minneapolis. He replied, "They eat horse turds if they can find them."

There are acres of cold snow.

Love,
Jack

Railroad trains lost their balance and buses stood on their hind ends and licked their wounded wheels when James Alexander came back to California.

And poor airplanes dripped sweat from their wings and little cars mooed as if they were not quite convinced they were mechanical.

When James Alexander came back to California he and the other poet who exists in the universe formulated a series of true propositions:

THAT POETRY ALONE CAN LOVE POETRY

THAT POEMS CRY OUT TO EACH OTHER FROM A GREAT DISTANCE

THAT POETS, BEING BASTARD FATHERS, LOVE EACH OTHER LIKE BASTARD FATHERS WHEN THEY SEE THEIR CHILDREN PLAYING TOGETHER

THAT POEMS PLAY TOGETHER FROM A GREAT DISTANCE

It was made illegal for a bachelor to watch poems.

When James Alexander came back to California they hunted mushrooms together in the cold rocks of the Berkeley Hills.

They invented a game which was more complicated than bridge or chess or football which was played with gum and chalk and a piece of common wrapping paper.

They made it utterly impossible to identify God.

Having a hand in each other's hand, they walked down every street on which it was possible to walk, having the pavements dictated to them by an angel.

They purged history of contemporary reference.

They wrote poetry that had to be looked at from a distance on a gigantic playground. Their children split words.

The scholars who found these children died in agony.

One thumb opposed one thumb, each thumb was the center of the universe.

They forged a lost manuscript of Rimbaud's *La Chasse Spirituelle* for their own purposes. It was mysteriously discovered to have been written in English.

They found that they had one tongue
We shall find that we have one tongue
I hope that we shall find that we have one tongue.

Love
Jack

Dear James,

I don't know if there is room in the world for a postoffice but you come across 'em often enough, if you don't make the mistake of pretending that they're in a fixed place (like the moon) and if you don't let their continual changes bewilder you.

It's rather like hunting mushrooms. They grow in certain places and you can never be sure where their (certain) places will be after the next rain but you get a sense of where they won't be and don't go there. Unless, of course, they tell you.

The letters, poems, kisses (since the original game of postoffice is stuck in the mysterious regions of childhood) are directed by a fantastically inefficient system up to the place where poetry comes from and then back down again to the person whose poetry, or letters, or love was meant to receive it. It is a lot different from Air Mail.

And it is almost impossible to list the random places from which they will deliver their letters. A box of shredded wheat, a drunken comment, a big piece of paper, a shadow meaningless except as a threat or a communication, a throat.

Believe them all but obey the postofficers who tell you when to believe them or obey them.

If you don't have money for the money order why not send me the pawntickets (I have money for a few months) and I will send you pawntickets with the equivalents of a watch and a typewriter upon them. The real pawntickets are letters.

Love
Jack

Dear James,

Went down to Duncan and Jess's Friday to read them the letters.

Their house is built mainly of Oz books, a grate to burn wood, a second story for guests, paintings, poems, and miscellaneous objects of kindly magic. Cats. It is a place where I am proud (we are proud) to read the letters. It is a postoffice. I had not realized how little alone one is in a postoffice. Before I had merely posted the letters and wondered.

It is possible if you have the humility to create a household and the sense to tread on all pieces of bag magic as soon as they appear to create a postoffice. It is as mechanical as Christmas.

Late at night (we drank a gallon of wine and talked about the worlds that had to be included into our poetry—Duncan wanted me to send Creeley the letters because Creeley, he said, needed the letters—and I went to bed upstairs with George MacDonald's *Lilith*. I had to piss and walked down the outside stairs and saw (or heard but I think I saw) the ocean and the moonless stars that filled the sky so full of light I understood size for the first time. They seemed, while I was pissing away the last of the wine and the conversation, a part of the postoffice too.

This I promise—that if you come back to California I will show you where they send letters—all of them, the poems and the ocean. The invisible

Love
Jack

It is not the monotony of nature but the poems beyond nature that call to each other above the poets' heads. The heads of poets being a part of nature. It is not for us to make the lines of nature precise. It is for the poems to make the lines of nature precise. Because of their fatal attraction for the lines of nature, for our heads.

We proclaim a silent revolution. The poems above our heads, without tongues, are tired of talking to each other over the gabble of our beliefs, our literary personalities, our attempts to project their silent conversation to an audience. When we give tongue we amplify. We are telephone switchboards deluded into becoming hi-fi sets. The terrible speakers must be allowed silence. They are not speaking to us.

How is it then our business to talk of revolution—we heads of poets one named Jack and one named James, three in the distance named Ebbe, Charles, and Robert? It is because we as their victims, as their mouthpiece, must learn to become complete victims, complete pieces of their mouth. We must learn that our lips are not our own. A revolution is a savage education.

There are people that talk about poetry like tired insurance clerks talk about baseball. They must be destroyed by our silence. Even the hatred of them interrupts the conversation that our poems wish to continue. Even the mention of them makes it me talking, crashes into paradox what was their truth.

We do not write for each other. We are irritable radio sets (but the image of the talking head of a horse on the wall in Cocteau's first *Orpheus* was a truer image) but our poems write for each other, being full of their own purposes, no doubt no more mysterious in their universe than ours in ours. And our lips are not our lips. But are the lips of heads of poets. And should shout revolution.

Love

Jack

Dear James

It is absolutely clear and absolutely sunny as if neither a cloud nor a moon had ever been invented. I am lying here on the grass of the University of California, a slave state but one which today seems peculiarly beneficent. I have not had a letter from you in weeks.

I read them all (your letters and mine) to the poets assembled for the occasion last Wednesday. Ebbe was annoyed since he thought that letters should remain letters (unless they were essays) and poems poems (a black butterfly just flew past my leg) and that the universe of the personal and the impersonal should be kept in order. George Stanley thought that I was robbing Jim to pay James. They sounded beautiful all of them.

Things cannot die in such a spring (unless the old men of the world commit suicide (our suicide) over the question of whether East Germans be called East Germans in diplomatic notes) and every leaf and flower of this red-hot February asks me to remember this. Though it is on the other side of poetry, spring, thank whatever created both of them, is spring. And I am not sure on a day like this that the living and dying world does not have something analogous to poetry in it. That every flower and every leaf (properly read) is not a James as well as a Jim.

Things cannot die in such a spring and yet your silence (for the spring itself proclaims that there are such things as clouds and moons) frightens me when I close my eyes or begin to write a poem.

I wish you were with me now on this grass and could be with me like the leaves and the flowers and the grass a part of this spring. Jim and James.

Love,
Jack

Dear James,

The only place I've found to retire into is your watch. I haven't covered it with bark and it is in no sense beautiful, but I haven't worn a watch in two years and I talk to it (mostly about you and what it was like to be worn on your wrist) and sometimes I spend a few seconds watching its second hand stuttering by (green and nervous) and it really is, all things considered, a natural object like a tree or a flower or a bark covered table. A postoffice.

And the watch believes what I tell it. "There are two kinds of places in the world," it wants me to tell you, "pawnshops and postoffices." You will find it hard to reeducate.

I don't like my poetry either. I read a new poem last Wednesday and nobody said much of anything and I asked why and Duncan said it was because it was a very good Jack Spicer poem and I threw the poem in the garbage sack not tearing the poem because it was a very good Jack Spicer poem. The watch was ticking on my wrist all the time and was not a Jack Spicer wrist-watch and would never be a Jack Spicer wristwatch and that should be the way with the poems.

It's rather like a medium (a real medium) who gets a spirit, call her Little Eva, to control her. Pretty soon, after a few sessions, she'll get to know what Little Eva is going to say and start saying it for her. Then it's no longer a seance but fakery and time to change spooks.

That's what your watch tells me. TIME TO CHANGE SPOOKS!

I don't know what your table tells you, but if you came back to California we might arrange a favorable exchange of spooks.

Love
Jack

Dear James,

This letter is entirely from the other Jack, the nervous worried guy who puts letters into envelopes and receives them from same. The other Jack, the one who wrote you all the letters, is puzzled about the change of postoffices. This Jack, me, being more practical, is wondering

(A) Did you receive his last letter (about watch, p.o. vs pawnshop, ghost-trading etc.) before letters of 31st, 1st ult? Or at all?

(B) Is someone reading and destroying his letters because if so don't because it is harmless to the real world insofar as poetry is harmless to the real world. Which is not so far.

Or (C) What?

He, the other Jack, is probably asleep. I hate him sometimes.

He (it was really my suggestion) on account of (B) is sending this letter from the address of an imaginary little magazine. We have both still our own.

Love (insofar as I can say it too)
Jack

Dear James,

The mirror does not break easily regardless of what is reflected in it, regardless of whether there are blue apples, Rimbaud, or even angry white light belonging in it, imprisoned, one might say, in the death of its surface. It is the oblique patience of an Alice who plays with her cat and waits for something between her and the image to melt away. It is the oblique patience of children.

When you rush bravely against the mirror shouting "This is also my universe" you are likely merely to get a bloody nose. That surface has no patience with violence. Even as these letters are our mirrors and we imprisoned singly in the depths of them.

So it is (the violence of the impatient artist) that I keep trying to draw the form of these letters to a close merely because I am going to read them to an audience of boobies and one or two poets. Ridiculous attempt to break the glass! The letters will continue. The letters will continue after both of us are dead. The letters would continue even if we were in the same room together, even though our faces were so close that we could hardly speak—or so distant that our hearts could not touch.

Mirror breaker! I simply do not have the patience merely to let the mirror dissolve. I keep tapping my hand on it. Help me!

Love
Jack

Dear James,

I'll not explain the mistakes the other Jack made in the last letter. They're obvious. And I'm sure they belong to the poetry of it somewhere too.

I am glad that you're not going to New York. Letters sent to there or received from there would be filled with worms. Any other city. But, of course, if you come here there will be a double advantage for if Jim and the other Jack can't talk to each other and won't let James and Jack talk to each other (unlikely because of the bridge of love we have erected between us but possible God knows) we can still, defying both of them, send letters to each other from the same city. Which would be as unnatural as poetry often is.

Our letters again will cross. Your watch will count out the days and hours of the month. As our letters will.

Love

Jack

Dear Jim,

I am writing this letter to you rather than James as it is a Christmas letter and both he and I would find it uncomfortable—like saying Merry Christmas to Rimbaud. You, on the other hand, having several faces will be able to select a face appropriate to its reception.

Religion is the shadow of the obvious—and all the paraphernalia of Christmas from the Christ child to the Santa Claus selling ties in a department-store window is just this—religion—the infinite shadow that a false beard or a plaster child can cast. What is under that book lying face downward on the bed or that green radio on the floor? Whatever it is disappears when you pick the object up, but on holidays you can see the shadow that the thing casts. That is why a real Child is born on Christmas, why there *is* a Santa Claus.

Why am I writing you to tell you about this? It is because I am afraid that you may be too young to believe and James too busy to believe in this holiday, that you may confuse the shadows with the things that cast them and believe that there is nothing there. This is not important to James, to the poet who can watch in his own poetry something even more than these shadows—but it is you I am wishing Merry Christmas.

Tell James: I am reading my poetry in public on February 14th and at it reading all his letters.

Jack

Dear James

It was not really the thought of reading them (because I didn't, not on Valentine's Day which would be a threat of perfection, but tomorrow to poets at one of those poetry meetings that were in your time Sundays) but as the prose stretches like a big rubber ball with no middle to it, but the hoverings and threats of evil (do you understand magic or do I have to teach it to you?) that made me lean on the death of our letters. It is a black thing evil is, having nothing to do with good and bad, or even beautiful and fucked up, having much more to do with the inside and outside of a man than good does.

The opposite of it is poetry or pajamas or Paracelsus or anything else in the universe that begins with P.

Magic begins with M and is neutral. So does man, more, much, me, made, middle, meetings, and the last half of tomorrow. Evil denies that this could even be an alphabet.

This is so near to the truth that I don't want to finish the letter. Love that begins with an L like my heart does.

Love

Jack

Dear James,

Sun Dance have just arrived. They speak in wholly (think how *they* would divide that word) wholly different language. I should have known in the places in the letters but that was more like seeing the impossible footprints of a bird on the wet sand—and now seeing the bird I don't know why but I keep thinking of a pterodactyl.

How can they be read by voice? But why in hell should we have to use our mouths to hear messages? And the letters of the alphabet (as Thoth and Rimbaud both told me) are more than mere sounds. But I want to hear the words from your mouth—that's what one unsurprised part of me demands—like when they didn't have any way to write them *down* and they had to be chanted around a fire in a cave or a banquet hall. And the words and the sounds of the words were the same thing. But at that rate the painter would still be chiseling pictures of animals on blank rock.

Tired ar/gue/ments. *Sun Dance* are a school of real birds having come from somewhere up there. I take off my head to you.

Love
Jack

I 4

In the Grand Pyramid they buried the king with all his bottles, postage stamps, and half-eaten loaves of bread. Were they really the king's, Cocteau asks us in his article on Memory, or were they manufactured for the occasion?

No one knows better than I do how lonely you are.

In the Grand Pyramid there are the most complicated mathematical systems and the most complicated moral systems and chains of amethyst and diamond hanging just out of reach. It is the center of the universe.

Were they invented for the occasions?

In the Grand Pyramid it is darker than it ever was and the king is still there. The king communicates by magic and he tells me "Build a pyramid for yourself" and he tells you, "Find a postage stamp" and he eats a little of the bread and drinks a little from the bottles he has manufactured.

The postage stamp has a picture of the Grand Pyramid engraved on it; the pyramid has not been yet invented.

No one knows how lonely you are better than I do.

from THE GROANING

Remi Bouthonnier

my father said you are a box all objects are going to enter as equation the
galaxies are elastic all turns at the same speed you are yourself a small object

my mother articulates me arms to drenched brain in the living rivers she
palpitated depulped i lap it up under her soaking skirts

my father as thunderstruck heavier hard and black as the earth seeming to see
in the sky clothing burn said it is necessary to die like the road slowly to sink

*

father split bird tinkers around the web my mother says he goes very far to
hunt in the nights he attacks vipers reflects on a branch and sings bravely
under the hostile moon

i open eyes huge to inhale father drops there some sky in small crystals and
says soon you too will be a rugged tool traveler it's written

mother drinking my marsh sinks her luxurious machines collapsing spits in
her hands a star she mixes makes me laugh

*

my mother as blocked comet

my father as worthless pulley

my mother as wrung snake

my father nailed

my mother as leaf frozen to his brow

cow launched from his rib

my father as propeller

my mother as stream of wheat

—translated from the French by Laura Mullen

MR. MAGNETO

Terese Svoboda

Mr. Magneto leads a love life: attract, repel. The fun wears out and then the wind blows and Mr. Magneto removes a clot of wax from his car.

Of a size. Others of his ilk, inventors of glue guns and cat catchers who suffer love drive or have, with the clutch of a life slipping and their own ears rattling with wax make their impressions.

Mr. Magneto presses the wax against his member and the wind blows.

Standing beside, or enough beside his car he cannot open it without member damage, he sees his electromagnetic field, a vision of poles in perfect line-up, legs kicking, matches crossing metal covers.

It is not so much the whole car he stands beside but important parts one thinks one would want but would soon learn to do without, in the heat of magnets, and flame.

The others who don't learn but lend themselves to learning, also standing beside the car.

The boy sliding the magnet thinks well of them, he even has one of them jump, jump at the flame like a dog.

The car comes out of the flames spanking new and he pounds it with a stick sharp with stone until it takes on a shape.

Mr. Magneto gets into the newly shaped car the way you do after it's just been detailed and herds the rogue or dumb others together.

Sirens blare, wax melts.

You don't listen, says the older person to the boy and the boy looks up, the magnet on its string swinging.

OLD SWEETHEART SLAMS WHITE RUSSIANS AND MUDSLIDES ON DITMARS BLVD., ASTORIA

Carolyn Hembree

First words out of my mouth he say: "My, my you're not from around here."
Every bone cry *hie you hence* but in uniform he's out of this world.
Brass chicken hawk on brick wall exposed read 50 degrees.
Truly, I want a shortcut to the innermost workings of one other.

"You take your chances running night operations. I say goddamn."
Bird's eye view of his fingers spread out on his crown, flesh
wound. Through three shot glasses the waitress' fingers loop.
Clappin' off the beat he guffaw: "You dance like a country girl." Flush.

To the beaten path of his hand in the pile of my skirt go
towards the southernmost row houses, turn at the spicy restaurant
its awning rufflin'—there one woman lends another her rabbit fur.
Dream a man at the "N" station at the crack of dawn to sing and flaunt.

Now whether to sing or tell it other ways.
Leastways, 'top the gratings a man dance with a puppet life-size
its arms to his waist tied. "Hot little number," he say and has it
say *caramba* while the train skates in and speakers crackle live.

My sheets snapped flat and train-case crammed,
I never answered you (losin' your mind, scramblin' in the grass down)
askin' me years hence: "Why don't you sound now like where you're from?"
No, you just looking hard at me—the voice is from elsewhere thrown.

[illegible]

PARROTS KISS LIKE THIS

An Interview with Willem Boshoff

Willem Boshoff, born in 1951, is a South African sculptor and conceptual artist living in Johannesburg. His work, which draws heavily on text and language, is often prepared over long periods of time on the computer, and ranges from large installations, visual poetry, concrete poetry, and sculpture, to various other forms of graphic media. He represented South Africa at the 23rd International Biennale of Sao Paulo (1996), and he was one of two artists selected for "Authentic/Ex-centric: Africa in and out of Africa," an exhibition mounted at the Venice Biennale (2001). In 2000, for an exhibition entitled "Translation/Seduction/Displacement" at the White Box Gallery in Chelsea, New York, Boshoff showed an early work, "KykAfrikaans" (translated loosely as "Afrikaans to be looked at"), a series of concrete poems written between 1977 and 1980. A selection from this series accompanies the interview, which was conducted by Paul Jorgensen and Charity Ellis for www.onepeople.com.

I've spent a number of days looking at your work and would love to talk about your background here in South Africa. What was it like growing up here?

The earliest that I can think of is school. We have a very low emphasis on art at school because it's a drudgery. Art is supposed to be for sissies. It was a particularly macho environment in the school that I went to, and I think that this type of environment still prevails today. When I was in standard seven in the middle of the 1960s, we had a teacher, who was the art teacher, but he was not allowed to teach art as a subject. He taught art more as a pastime for the kids in the lower standards. In standard seven I decided to be an artist [Laughter]. I think it is something that I carried on wanting to do mainly because it wasn't something we were supposed to be doing at

school. There is a bit of a rebellious streak deep down in my subconscious; from time to time I still find myself calling the speed cops and giving them hell because I don't like the way they're setting up roadblocks. And I still find myself calling the SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation] to complain about programs—so I do have a tendency to object. Maybe sensibly, maybe not so sensibly.

At school, my one way of objecting was doing what they denied us. But it was a good thing because I fell in love more. Art became a big thing for me in standard seven. How old is one in standard seven? About fourteen. I decided I wanted to be an artist, a sculptor. My parents were distraught because it was not a typical Afrikaans thing to do. A good thing for an Afrikaner to do would be to become a minister, or to become a teacher, or someone respectable like a doctor or a politician. I didn't want to be any one of those at that time. In the end I decided to become an art teacher to make money. The people at school were very well educated in the politics of the country and taught us in a very Calvinistic, Christian sort of way. I didn't object maliciously, but with this mean streak that I have, I tried to outsmart the teachers, to show them up. I started writing crib notes, as a game in class, to try and show the teacher up. I would invent the most ingenious ways to cheat on the tests—not that I didn't know what they were teaching, but more to break the shackles of authority. So sometimes we would put crib notes with drawing pins under the table and flip them over—they knew of course. I was not alone. I was probably the instigator for a whole group of us.

What it taught me was there was a way to outsmart authority. That's one important thing that I learned through the crib notes. The other thing I learned was to write very small—to dwarf my writing, to be invisible, not to be detected, to be private. Later on I became very religious. I had a sort

of religious spell as a very young student in my second year. These crib notes came in very handy because I would write crib notes in the margin of the Bible.

Later on I used smaller writing as a technique to try and learn about meditation—a kind of meditation where one could become anonymous, or non-existent to other people, because anonymity became a very important factor for me, especially through the late 1970s and '80s. There was no way that Conceptual Art was going to be tolerated by the art establishment. You had more of a chance of getting novices to like your work than artists, because artists wanted to see color and image and representation. I've been making Conceptual Art since the early 1970s because I've used it as a kind of meditational tool—as a way of enriching myself. I've done various projects through the years in which I have set up systems to try and be more patient. At first the art was more religious, so patience was of the essence. I sat down every single morning for two years, writing as small as I could for ten minutes until my eyes got sore. I did not use a magnifying glass, just a really small pen. I would see the relevance of my crib notes in being able to write as small as that. I learned how to be pensive, introspective, meditative. I didn't like the kind of prayer where one just stands up and speaks words . . . it was like praying to a ghost or making God into a kind of spook. So I cut out all of the nonsense and tried various schemes and ways of educating myself through my work, and I became quite a bit of a recluse, a kind of monk practicing various forms of meditation. For one project, the 370 Day Project, I invented coded writing because I wanted to learn what creativity was about. You see, I was not concerned with selling work at the end of it. In fact, I didn't sell these works for years and years and years. I just made them to make myself try to understand. The 370 Day Project consisted of 370 blocks of wood. Each block of wood was a little plaque, and it was carved early in the morning. It took a couple of hours to work out what to carve . . . I needed to use a different species of wood for each day, so I would look for 370 different kinds of woods. I carried around notebooks, and I

recorded what I wanted to do that day. I set myself six tasks to learn what creativity was all about. I had to do things I'd never done before or do things in a way I'd not done them before. One thing I did was carry strange things in my pocket from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in an odd kind of sacrifice, or get on a ladder and draw lines on the ceiling from east to west, ten lines so long. So I would decide early in the morning on these six tasks. It was like the creation—six days, and I had to do various things everyday. I once gave flowers to a nun. I had to find a nun and find the flowers. She asked me why I was giving her flowers, so I had to explain about the project. I learned social skills through this as well. If I needed wood—for example, Querkus Polestars (the pin oak)—I had to get permission from somebody because I saw a dead branch high up in a tree in their back yard. I had to explain to these people, "Please let me cut that branch from that tree. . . ."

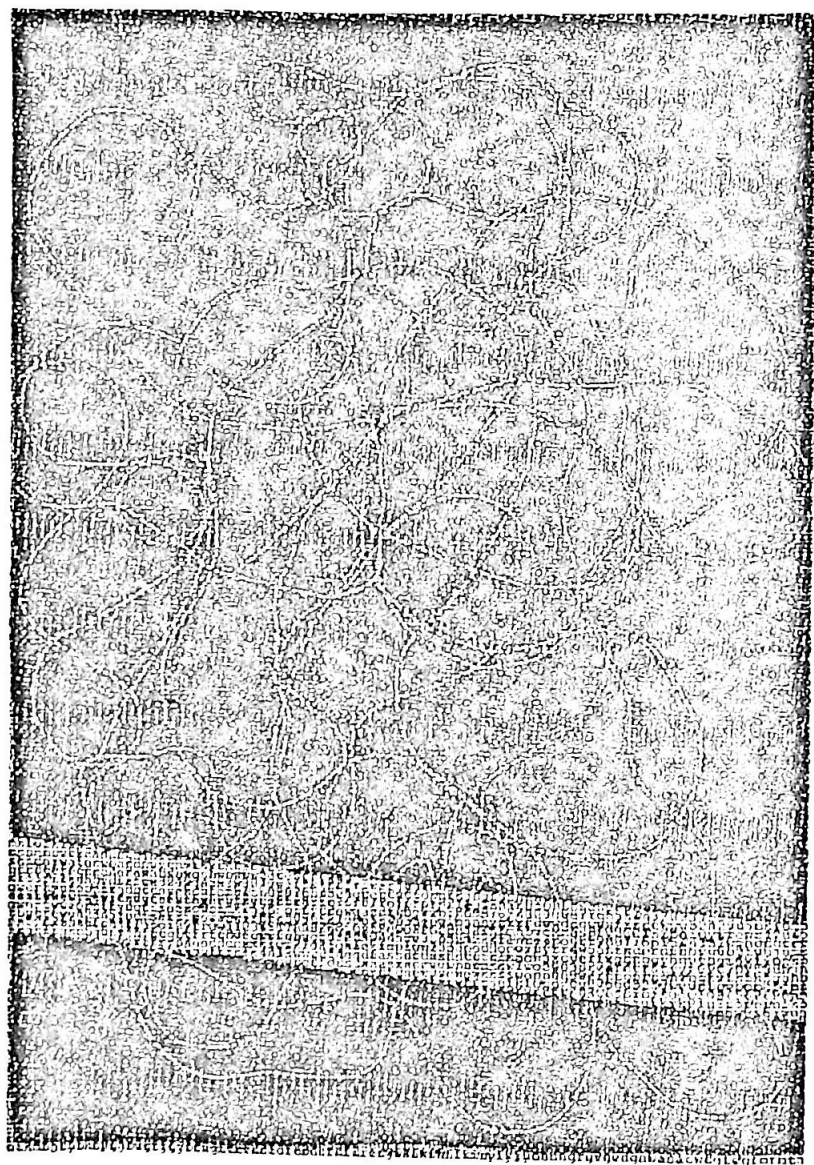
This 370 Day Project is like a diary. It's like a notebook carved in wood. I did keep notebooks, as well. I'd get up early in the morning and make drawings of the little blocks. There were many symbols—a symbol for eating, talking, drinking, looking, and listening—and there were three groups of symbols. One for pleasure, one for sacrifice, and then one for beauty in between pleasure and sacrifice. For each wood block there were many tasks that I would perform: I decided I was going to eat something I'd not eaten before, or prepared in a way in which I'd not eaten it, or eat it in a special place. I thought I'd learn about creativity in that way. I tried for a whole year just to be a work of art.

The project started in Venice, on September 12, 1981. I decided to begin the work on my birthday. I was with other people, and so as not to disturb them, I went to sit on the toilet and spent some time carving the first block. I think it was Yellowwood. The average kind of wood, with the density of about 36 pounds per cubic foot, say, would carve in maybe three to five hours. But the hardest woods, with the density of 72 pounds per cubic

foot—black woods and wild olive—would take nine hours to carve because it was so hard to get into the wood with the little knife that I was using. We traveled through Europe, and I had to get up at four every morning so as not to inconvenience anyone. I designed a little pilgrim toolbox, and in this toolbox I had a cloth that I would put across my knees so the wood chippings would not fall on the floor. Then I would take out the blocks and the books and start drawing. I remember coming back from Europe on the airplane and everyone looking at me. Fairly late at night I would start doing it while people were still having drinks and messing around. Everyone would come by and ask what the hell I was doing, and I had to explain—it became a big conversational hassle sometimes.

Martin was born in 1981 on the 22nd of December, and I had to do a piece at the maternity home waiting for him to be born. It needed to be done. In 1981 I also ran the Comrades Marathon and had to get up very early that morning to work. I think it took some minutes off my time; I was already tired when I arrived at 7 a.m. that morning. But I got the silver medal. I needed certain things. I needed to do something. I didn't know what it was. Maybe it had to do with what people called art. I was a bit confused because I did not know what art was for much of that time, because I did not like the art I saw. I knew that it had to do with conceptual reality but I didn't understand. In order to understand, I tried setting up structures which would manifest as art works themselves.

Because I couldn't get many different pieces of wood for the 370 Day Project, I joined the Dendrological Society. Eventually I ended up being the Secretary for the Southern Transvaal Region. I would take people into the bush and discuss ecology with them—that was good. I believe that whatever I am doing at the time is part of the art that I must make, or the life I must live. I do not want to separate things out too much. I cannot drive a car while I am reading, but I can drive a car when I am listening to a tape . . .



1. The first step in the process of the investigation is the identification of the problem. This involves a thorough review of the available information and a clear definition of the issue at hand.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to gather relevant data. This can be done through various methods, including interviews, surveys, and the analysis of existing records.

3. After gathering the data, the investigator must analyze it to identify patterns and trends. This step is crucial in understanding the underlying causes of the problem.

4. The final step in the process is to develop and implement a solution. This involves creating a plan of action and ensuring that it is effectively carried out.

5. Throughout the entire process, it is important to maintain clear communication and documentation. This ensures that all parties involved are kept informed and that the progress of the investigation is properly recorded.

6. Finally, the results of the investigation should be reviewed and evaluated. This helps to determine the effectiveness of the solution and provides valuable feedback for future investigations.

the idea is to cut out the boundaries. I went through the '70s reading a lot, writing a lot of funny things, and doing concrete poetry. I went through the '80s doing more conceptual work than physical work. The work has to do with language, dictionaries, a collection of names.

Let's talk about these symbols. Were they part of an existing language?

I've worked with disqualifying the text a great deal. To try to dislocate the text, to show how expectations of text and scripture are unrealistic. I have performed circus tricks with cryptic texts, even before this 370 Day Project. For example, my first conceptual piece was the series of annotations I wrote in the margins of the Bible. I tried to memorize the New Testament in 1972 to help me understand the text, and I tried incessantly to write what I thought the text meant in the margins. I tried to clarify issues. I drew a lot of little lines from the verse to where I had written a little piece, so you'd find a lot of criss-crossing. It actually became a very organic sheet with this fixed text in the center. Around it was clouded with all the thoughts I had about the text, which were far more important to me than the text. Unfortunately the text is retired. The text is something that gets people to stop growing, to stop thinking. It sets a paradigm that is impossible to move away from. If you believe it and adhere to it and never grow beyond that, then the text is a dictator. At first the text was supposedly the clouded peripheral vision of people who thought that it was important, but no one sees that. They think it's a be-all and end-all. In the same way that I tried to uproot the sense of authority of people at school, the text became something to be uprooted rather than to be enslaved to. The worst thing that could have happened was the invention of the book. I love books—it's a paradox because the incunabula, the cradle, the books of Gutenberg, started something very bad. It was necessary and very bad. It was necessary to preserve knowledge, but it was very bad because it left no alternative, no deviation. So in my concrete poetry I dealt specifically with the Bible—that

its words are not supposed to be upheld as tenants. You will find that the concrete poetry I wrote in the '70s mostly deals with biblical text, but a subversion of the text.

It's much more important for the text to be an opponent than a friend. You don't learn anything from it if it's passive. If it's only supposed to teach you something, it dies on you, it betrays you, you betray it. So I would take the Gospel according to St. John in Afrikaans—I deal with things that often go extinct, and the issue of extinction is very important to me because Afrikaans is on the brink of becoming the world's youngest extinct language. It used to be the world's youngest language. I want to come back to that after I explain this thing with the text. In the Gospel according to John, I would take what was written in Afrikaans and try to use it as an instigator to foster reactions. Where it would say, "Die Heilige ewe van gee die Volgenes Johannes," I would write in my concrete poem, "sss ssssss sss sss sss sss ssssss ssssss"—the sound of the snake. I actually called it SS, the name of the Gestapo, because I felt the text was that. Then it says "Een, In die beginning was die woord," in the beginning the word was God, and I would write, "Sss ss sss ssssss sss sss sssss." Now when you go to church, you will sit down and read the Gospel According to John as part of the normal liturgy. Five minutes later you can ask the whole church what they just read, but you will rarely find someone who knows or remembers unless they have some significant reason to. I wanted to write the SS in that spirit. This is as people may very often hear it—it's just like the sound of the wind. There is a philosophical spirit. I don't like the way the word *spirit* is portrayed by the church. I think it's completely different. I've written many dictionaries now, and I think I know what it is through having done this research. It is quite a bold statement to make. Spirit has to do with language, with intent, with consciousness, but not to do with the 'spook' [ghost]. It's not a person, although it is personified. There's a verse in the Gospels that tells us that the spirit is like the wind. It blows where it wants to go, and I think that's what the text should do: be left to be, do its thing, come and

go like the waves in the sea. It's a current, an energy. So I have other concrete poetry that deals with the way the wind would blow the text, the way the text changes all the time in conversation, in the house. Completely unpredictable. I wanted that disqualification of the text.

St. Augustine said you must read it in the spirit in which it was written, and if it was written in the spirit to mess with you, you should mess with it. The word *Apocalypse*, from the Greek word *apo*, means "away from." *Apothiosius* literally means "to fall away from grace or fall away from God." There are many words with *apo* in front of them. *Apo-calypto*: something is going to go away. *Caliptos*, in Greek, is the thing that monks had over their heads. It's like a cowl that comes right down over their faces. They can see where they walk, but you will not see their faces. *Portulilla caliptrata*: the little blow lily that has a caliptrate flower. The flower looks like a monk's cowl, the botanical name will tell you. Literally, *apocalypse* means "to pull away the veil, to take a look at the face of something." But it doesn't do that—the face it shows you is one of complete obscurity. I have written . . . this sheet that consists of rather blackish writing. If you look at it, it is rather uniform. Look at line one: here and there is a white spot with three spaces between three words overlapping, and every now and then you can see a letter because sometimes only two letters overlap and then there is a white spot on the third one. So it looked like a starry sky.

Was it possible for the audience to understand the complexity of the 370 Day Project?

I don't want people to understand. I want to confuse them. I want to mess with them. I want to get blind people worried about helping me, and then after a while become indulged in the thing. Maybe they'll enjoy it. I'm not preaching a specific message. I want people to be creative in their heads, to free themselves from singular points of view, to break the boundaries between different words.

What inspired the Blind Alphabet project?

I have my own head, and I have to answer to that. Not having the safety of belonging, I belong to a church, but I'm a peripheral shit-stirrer. I don't like what they are doing, so I try to find ways of making visual statements to object. I had a run-in with the authorities towards the end of the '70s because I changed my mind about the military service. I became a pacifist. At school I was put in the cadets and told to march—you had to join the army, there was no choice. If you didn't do it, you went to jail. I refused to carry a rifle and wear a uniform. To prepare myself for jail I developed a spy writing, very similar to the early crib notes I'd made years before. It consisted of very small dots that looked like rain. It's called type rain. It's very organic—letters go across the page. Apollinaire was the first one who tried to write about the rain. Not by explaining what it looks like, but by the way that he typed. Now I wanted this to feel like raindrops so you wouldn't know which one to see. I wrote a book about pacifism while in one of the camps. They put me away from the other soldiers so I wouldn't become an instigator of trouble. I sat behind a desk. No one noticed me. They thought I was doing army work. I then had a way of writing down my thoughts and of remaining private so that no one could get to me. I carried on writing—it would be in my spy writing. It helped me retain my sanity, and it was a practical method of remaining anonymous.

Anonymity has always been an important thing to me—to vanish and just be in a position of understanding. That is why a lot of my writing looks like Braille—it looks almost exactly like Braille if you don't know what Braille looks like [laughs]. Cuneiform, from the ancient Phoenicians, is three dimensional writing. It has texture. The word *texture* and the word *text* were originally the same word, and that is how I like writing to be. Something you can touch that's cryptic. The less you understand, the more you build into it. It is good for us to be stupid—not stupid, but in a certain sense, in trouble. Because if you are in trouble you begin to use your own

weirdness of interpretation. You begin to develop a headspace, instead of believing certain things that lead you nowhere. That was why it was natural for me to accept Braille as part of my work. The other important thing about the Blind Alphabet project is the boxes. In the mid-70s, I made a box that looked like a bundle of twigs. When you see the bundle of twigs, it doesn't look like much. But it has a lid which can be taken off. I had to glue the twigs very cunningly. Inside there was a glass box the size of a ten Rand note. I wanted to use that box to help me give money to poor people. So it was like a piggy bank. In the scriptures, I found a principle of living a life in secrecy. For example, your right hand is not supposed to know what your left hand is doing when you give money to poor people. I tried very often to be charitable, and I failed miserably, I must add. This little box I used to help myself. It is big enough inside to contain ten Rand notes—well it was, until they changed the size of the currency.

When I gave money to certain people they told me that I was doing it for myself. And they were right, they were absolutely right. So I abandoned all that nonsense. One can't actually do good for people by just giving them money. It actually goes a lot wider and deeper and further . . . I am actually scared of doing good to anyone. I think if you patronize people in a simplistic way, you destroy them. I do not want to help blind people, I do not want to be nice to them. I think we have helped them enough. I want them to help us. That is the basis for the Blind Alphabet. In the Blind Alphabet, I used Braille and boxes; because of what I'd done a long time ago, it was a build-up of my own work. It is based on the idea that in order for sighted people to get help from blind people, sighted people had to be crippled, had to be made blind. What I did in the end was use the idea of boxes. I covered the work because I saw this sign once at an art gallery—a nice big sign that said "Do Not Touch." I could put my work in a box and all the sighted people would see this sign. In the Sao Paulo Biennial the people looked at the work and looked at the lids, shaking their heads. They felt cheated. We did them a favor in the beginning by getting blind people there,

because blind people don't see the sign that says "Do Not Touch." For them it's the same as being in a room with the lights off. They actually cope with the work, they are on familiar territory with the work being up there. Their natural instinct is to go to the work, and when they stand in front of the boxes, they don't feel daunted by it. In the very beginning there were 350 sculptures in 350 boxes. It was the length of half a rugby field. You see all of this stuff and you are not allowed to touch—you only see a labyrinth, like an extended cemetery. You see that there is something to look at but you become very frustrated. If there is a blind person present they come to the first box and they feel something. At that point they don't know that there are 350 other boxes in front of them, so they don't feel as if they are in a labyrinth or in a graveyard. They take the lid off of the first box, and they can feel to the side, "Ah there's another box." They immediately know that next to this box is another box. After they take off the lid, they put the lid on top of the next box and they begin to feel what is inside. At this time they start to discover that the lid has Braille on it. It takes them less than five minutes to figure out how to work this thing.

It is a work that explains itself. They can take as much time as they like going from box to box. Now usually, if they go to the art gallery, there is no one to help them, you'll take them to the first sculpture and say, "you can look at the sculptures by touching them." They will only see one sculpture because they are in a maze of disorientation. They do not know where the second sculpture is, and they don't know what to do. So they need a sighted person. But in my work, they need no one. They just need to be there. Blind people have to make sense, they have to interpret the text and explain it to the sighted people. What usually happens is one blind person will arrive on the scene and start figuring it out and start opening the boxes. And suddenly several people from different parts of the exhibition—this rugby field of shapes with people aimlessly running around shaking their heads in disgust and disbelief that they are not allowed to participate in the work. Suddenly they see a blind person. I have seen this happen a few

times—there was a blind person at the Johannesburg Art Gallery opening—suddenly this blind person started reading, and I saw the people on the side of him start crying. They literally started crying when they saw him do this. Someone can be at one moment so angry when they're not allowed into the work, and then the next moment they suddenly understand the work. I always say that the work makes itself. I put all of these things together and, like a machine, if a blind person arrives, the machine does this for them, and if a sighted person arrives, the machine does something particular for them. If the two of them arrive together the machine works 100%, the way it is supposed to.

Could you discuss the sculptures of the Blind Alphabet?

Many of the boxes have more than one sculpture. For instance, the words *bicipitous* and *bicordal* have the meaning of "two-headed" and "two-tailed." There is this South African sculptor named Jochaim Schoenveld who has made these wonderful cattle-like images out of wood—the African bull with two heads. Sometimes they have more than one tail. I wanted blind people to see that this is a word that you can use for mythical beings, for a two-headed monster. Jochaim Schoenveld has actually used the African tradition and this is his two-headed bull. So for the front sculpture I carved a two-headed block, and for the back sculpture I carved a two-tailed thing on a block, and if you put them together you'll get the idea of a two-headed bull or an ox, and in the Braille you'll read Jochaim's name, where he carved his sculptures, where the words are used in botany, what plants may be two-headed. This opens up the world to the blind people. There were about 345 sculptures, 350 boxes. Some of the boxes had books in them. If you work with a blind person and you try to help them see something nice, you can't take them to a circus, you can't show them pictures in a book, you can't show them the ceiling—you have to show them something which is within arm's reach. They speak of something which is beyond arms reach as a teloramic task. Shortsighted people can't very often undertake teloramic

tasks. In dealing with blind people, this teloramic thing is actually as far as you can reach out to touch, not see. So you have to find a way to share visual experiences. One way is like we are now, sitting out here in the garden listening to the birds. They can listen to the birds, but they don't know that the garden is green, they don't know that there's a tree over there. They have no sense of distant space. You want to share this with them. I'm making such a fuss about this because language is the only thing that will help them see. If you take them to a park you'll talk a lot. They like to listen and they don't mind being touched. Sighted people don't like being touched because if I come closer to you and touch you, you might think funny of me. Blind people depend on us to grab them by the hand and take them out and talk to them. The problem is when you get to the park and speak to the blind, people begin to patronize them. I've seen many people meaning to do well, trying to do good for them, who begin to treat blind people like children. You tell them about the beautiful grass, and your voice is galloping as if you're a nursery school teacher. You talk to them like little kids, and eventually they become fed up with you because they can't stand the tone of your voice. What I'm saying is that language is the most important thing to help them understand external form. We make sculpture in their minds, we use language as a plastic medium to sculpt the world around them so that they can get an idea of what it looks like. They are used to the idea that speech is form, speech is plastic, and they depend on it.

So in this work, the Blind Alphabet Project, language is the vehicle of sculpture—but in this case, it is reversed. The blind people have to do the talking now. I don't want them to patronize us so I gave them this academic text: they come to us with an informed text and they are their own person. They have to share something which is difficult so that they don't also fall into a trap of patronizing us, treating us like kids. They make the sculpture in our minds, and they must also get an idea of what it feels like to be pestered, to be hassled all the time—"Agh, won't you show me this . . . agh, won't you show me that." When they stand around to look at the work, there are lots

of people who will come hassle them because they are the saving grace, the only refuge. What I wanted was for blind people to be guides, to be the instructors, to be in charge of an experience in an art gallery from which sighted people can benefit. I wanted to create a tribe, like Wittgenstein said once, "A tribe of blind people in which sighted people occurred as exceptions."

The conceptual art that you create is not immediate—it evolves over a long period of time. Can you discuss your working methods?

The projects that I do are for myself. They're liberating for me. The project that I started in 1982 was a dendralogical society in order to learn the names of all plants. I worked that into an artwork that was finished last year—well it's not finished yet, but I showed the work, I was able to put something out. I don't think I'll ever finish anything, properly, I'm still working on it. This year I'll go to Edinburgh Botanical Gardens and also to New York Botanical Gardens. I want to go to Pretoria Botanical Gardens, to carry on with my botanical work so it will grow. It is a very large work, but at least I know what it will look like, what it looks like now. It has been put out onto the floor and I've sewn all of these weird names, the botanical names of all the plants. Basically, I have this Garden of Words which holds close to 4,000 plants. They've been recorded into the computer and printed out on labels that I put out on the ground. I have many other names that I have never actually seen before, but I can't use something that I am not actually engaged with. So what I want is to look at a plant and examine it, try to memorize the name of it, and find characteristics in it that I can remember. Then I put it in my head. My garden is in my head. I have a garden at the house here but it's very unkempt. It is full of plants for me to study rather than plants to. . . I like it very much. I don't want a garden that is regimented, as in books. It must just grow by itself. It must be full of different lives. I do not want just a lawn that can grow with a few wild trees. I have many, many hundreds of trees in many places here around the house which I am studying, trying to memorize, trying to form relationships with.

So it has to do with an intimate association with somebody, something. I am still doing things for myself, to help myself understand, rather than making art for other people.

This Blind Alphabet Project is a spin-off of a bigger project I'm starting at the end of April—it is an attempt to defend myself against supercilious academic arrogance. I have had lots of people who have tried to put me down because I am Afrikaans and I speak English with an accent. Many English speaking academics have a suspicion that because you have an accent you must be stupid. It's the same thing I eventually discovered with blind people. Just because they're blind doesn't mean that they are stupid. I could never get rid of my accent. I married an English wife, we have English children, I taught in English schools, I studied in English, and I still have this nagging thing which betrays the fact that I might be stupid. There were these people who would try and use mime and portray a typical Afrikaans-speaking bloke as stupid, but they are actually these academic, bright people and everyone would laugh themselves to death, so it was fine. They started structuring a game, a social game. These people would use very intelligent words all of the time so that you would have to guess what the words mean. I felt the way to defend oneself would be to learn these words. . . and then use a similar tactic on them. I started writing dictionaries to learn difficult words. Towards the end of the 1980s I went through the Oxford English Dictionary, starting on page one, looking at the first word. Every time I came across a word I didn't know, I would write it on the computer and explain it to myself. I wrote a little dictionary with about 10,000 words. Every night I would sit and work for a few hours. At first it was just to defend myself. I said to myself, "there is no monopoly on language." After I went through the Oxford English Dictionary, I went through the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, the two volumes of the Webster dictionary, the dictionary of Visual Science, the dictionaries of Art and Architecture and then finally, one with very difficult words. Then I stopped, and said to myself "I'm not the only one with this dilemma, all the black people are in the same dilemma."

Everybody suspects that because they have this strange accent they must be stupid. It is not right to think of a person as being stupid because of their accent. I started using these words on people—at this time I knew a lot of funny words. It was like having a new car, you had to try it out. Every time these people would talk about using complex words, I would just respond accordingly. Their mouths would drop. I want to share this experience of exhilaration, of power, with all of the South African black people. We have eleven official languages. We have English and Afrikaans and then nine other black languages. Nine other languages that are disenfranchised. I want black people to also put down the supercilious, condescending academics that speak English, because it is in such a privileged position that all official documents are automatically written in English. You have a problem if you are somewhat educated in English. You can read it and speak it, but you have a big problem because nobody thinks you are worth anything because you don't speak it flawlessly. It doesn't mean you don't know what's going on.

What I am doing now is building ten walls. I will call them the "Wailing Walls." I might change the title; they're wailing walls because I want the academics to come to these walls and cry. I want them to be perplexed and discombobulated, so you will have on these walls words like *cataglotism*, written out, and right next to it will be the explanation, but written in Zulu. It means lascivious kissing—a kissing in which the tongues are intertwined. It's funny, parrots kiss like this. In the old days it used to be considered lascivious (French kissing). I want the Zulu to explain that to the professor in English at Wits. I want the Zulu to only have his standard six, to be able to read and write, of course, and speak English. The professor at Wits cannot speak Zulu, and if the Zulu could tell him how stupid he thinks he is because he can't speak Zulu, and the professor could tell him he's stupid because he can't speak English, it's my opinion that the Professor would be the most stupid. One thing I have learned is that the English language is a lot larger than I could have ever thought—you know it was formed through many, many years of hassle. By 1066 the English were run

over by the Danish, the French had been there, the Romans had been there, and every time the poor English have been taken over by a foreign force, just as much as the Zulus have been and the Afrikaans have been, they have survived. They have survived travelling to all the other parts of the world. They not only survived, they have also plundered their language in all of the parts of the world, they have become like the bully at school. I want to show the greatness of English, but I also want to show that a Zulu can understand things and speak with authority, speak with dignity—can be poetic, as sophisticated as the best English speakers. In the end I will build this bridge.

What do you think the social or moral responsibility is of the artist here?

Your question has to do with social responsibility, and I do think an artist has a social responsibility. At first conceptual art was a kind of formal subversion of the elements of art—creating art in a space where art has not existed before. At first it heavily relied on language. Take this work for example, made by one artist. He would take one sheet of white paper, A4, he would then put it in a computer, and make a photocopy of this and then he would take the white sheet out of the copier and put it as page one, then he would take the photocopy of page one and put it in the computer, and make a photocopy of the blank sheet. This is page two, a photocopy of a photocopy. He would repeat this and create a 100 page book. He calls it a work of art. I respect that work of art, in terms of its positioning. It has positioned itself where no one else has dared to go before. It sets a certain tendency—people have to now consider this impossible kind of situation. In that sense, this conceptual piece has more to do with uncertainty than with the certainty of beautiful color and expressive notions. It deals with chaos—trying to find out what's going on, and who we are. I think it was investigative, and it was apparently futile. I think those are the things that teach us about life in the end. In the seventies conceptual work was used in the sense of developing a social conscience and a social consciousness. Let's

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take, for example, the work of Hans Haak. In the middle of the '70s he was already protesting against Apartheid. In 1981 and 1982, when I was making my 370 Day Project, I saw a Dokumenta exhibition where he had these British Leyland Pieces. He took photographs of the Soweto riots in 1976, and the Soweto riots show a lot of people being hammered with sjamboks, lots of dust, and in the middle of this you saw Land Rovers, because they were their police vehicles. And then he put the slogan under it. "British Leyland, A Breed A Part." And right next to it he showed a Jaguar, which is also made by British Leyland, with this lush white woman on it. Everyone saw this work. It was a complete disaster for British Leyland. That stuff will be recognized as some of the greatest works of the century, because it was effective.

What are your thoughts about the role of new technology in the artist's work?

The Internet, e-mail, the computer, these are all various ways of disseminating and coming to grips with knowledge. Some of the work I have done dealt with text and specifically with the way writing will become obsolete. I have dealt with the book, and the way that the book will be replaced by the computer ultimately. It won't happen soon, but eventually. With the typewriter, the "KykAfrikaans" concrete poetry was a kind of attempt to celebrate the end of the typewriter. Last year I made three very big works to celebrate the demise of paper and the book, and the three works are entitled the "Tree of Knowledge" because a tree of knowledge is a system for dealing with information in order to propagate and to utilize knowledge. If you call it a tree you are talking about a book—paper is a processed tree. A tree of knowledge is simply a book. The tree of life as an archaic symbol will eventually replace the tree of knowledge, the tree of knowledge as a book, paper, newspapers, minutes of meetings, handouts, leaflets . . . goodness knows what else. In that capacity it has become a burden because it is depleting natural forests—not that you shouldn't utilize natural forests, but I think it has gone too far, even with all of the recycling of paper. Now I

deal with social issues in my work, and I think the 20th century is the century where social issues have come to the forefront, more than ever before. We've dealt with political correctness, we've dealt with the small group problems, we've dealt with feminist politics. People have taken a look at the 20th century and been ashamed of what they have done to each other, and they have tried to sort it out—colonialism has come to an end, different people in different parts of the world have found different solutions, communism has come and gone. It's a century that is characterized by an attempt to find political solutions. In the 21st century the emphasis is going to shift away from denominational politics, group or national politics, and focus on natural resources. The greatest threat will not be whether we hate or kill each other but whether we have enough food to eat, or enough natural resources.

What message do you have that you'd like people to get from your work?

I'm not into trying to set a trend. I have looked at myself and tried to improve myself. It was very difficult. It took a long time. I used work to try to make it easier for me to learn patience, to learn new words, to try to respect things. I think one needs to set up systems where people can help themselves overcome their fears. One must try and do one thing at a time. It doesn't happen overnight. I spend every night, many hours, trying to do one thing well, understand it, and then move on to the next thing. After a while things become obscured, you don't know where you are, you're only doing this one thing. Later on you can see what was going on earlier. To try to make sense of life is not an easy thing, and it comes in little chunks and other times big bits and you have to figure out how it fits together. Another thing I have learned in life is not to be condescending to things that, at first, look stupid to me. If I taught a class I would pick the ugliest kids and the most obnoxious ones and try to become their friends. I don't want teacher's pets. I find it difficult to teach people who are obnoxious, so I would try to make them feel responsible by going out of my way to share responsibility

with them. Eventually those are the ones that surprise me. Very often in art you find the oddball is the one that comes out on top. I've had to find my friends amongst people that are not normally socially acceptable, and I like that. I find that those people are wonderful. I live this very controversial life, mainly from where I stand, and I've made some very time consuming and labor intensive work—that's not what is important. What's important is to look for someone to play with.

OWED

Peter Henry

To the jacklit acolyte: a thimbleful of blueblood
beneath the black bridge on the third day.

To the spent moon who drags his lame leg like a stone sled:
the lament of the ointment of the carnival barkers.

To the gravel in the bootheels of the faithful: railroad cure-alls.
To the dancehall constable in the warm-water port: soft agents.

To my good ear, which will not stop the bombing: an abscess
forged by the wheelwright with the too-tight meat gloves.

To the blackamoor, the aviator & the selfsame quarryman:
the wheelchock, the spotcheck, the checkpoint, & the wheelchair.

To the plucky shrimper & his blacklisted skywriter: scented maps of the camp
& the meadow-vole's crosshairs for the quartermaster's betterment.

To the tanker-anchor & the skink: forty days & forty nights,
for the key in the cuff of the bloodsuit, for the good ear

which is saved for forty days & for the bad ear, for whom
forty days, as it is, would have disheartened the coverlet.

For as it is, forty days would have made for a cove, bathed
in blue wind & rife with patsies dumb as dirt.

For as it is, forty days would have stolen my neckbrace.
For as it is, forty days would have made the papers.

Forty days would have made the papers blank.
Forty days would have made my hands rub off on the papers.

Forty days would not have stopped with my hands.
For as it is, forty days would not have stopped

with the sidecar or the blowdart or the pincer or the lynchpin
or the panzer or the bundtpan. For as it is, forty days

stopped only when what was owed to the escarpment boss,
when what was owed to the hoofsmithy, owed to the apothecary,

owed to the alluvium, owed to clergy in the country, to the right reverend
& the roustabout festooned in joyous netting, was sent for.

For as it is, what was sent for is owed to the fever & the record, owed
to the air raid & the blood mouse & the gloved horse & the severe kite,

for this is what the causeway warrants.

PHOTOGRAPHY LOVES BANAL OBJECTS (BY MINOR WHITE)

Martha Ronk

Out of the jar of the same color, a white stalk
in the photograph plucked from a field of white stalks
I wanted to compare to the one stalk despite how many there were.
Photography is the form of wanting things to return
noiselessly in black and white:
a field of crinolines and satin slips,
the woman upstairs in the spare bedroom they called it in those days,
combing her hair and polishing her nails while she was watching herself
in the mirror before going into a field of stalks where I was walking.

AN AFTERNOON CLOUD OR LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON

I.

To think you can walk through it
like trying to paint skin.
We sat at the side of the bed our feet on the ground.
Later less like a sea and yet.
We hurry our minds as if we could.
Plausible sounds like its very shape.
Discipline its opposite though we think so.
Yet lesser than the sea and closer.
The skin on the face waited for sunset.
To think ahead of tides
isn't an everyday thing.

2.

Equally so and pleasantly so.
Even painting the striated stem of it.
Cohesion makes it out of nothing
a blank canvas in the corner of the room.
We sat as close as we could.
Nevertheless no nearer and no closer.
Called also *scouring rush* and related to fern
as related is a congruence of water.

3.

Madwort, alyssum, the gold rush of pleasure
as the sun goes down.
As cutting the air with a knife.

As comes from his cry to her.
Then a sudden storm.
Then a streak of sky no one took for an event
they could have been witness to.

4.
A de Chirico wisp of smoke over the girl
rolling her hoop across the square
the cigarette drift under the eaves
the wind blowing slipshod over the sky
the shadow of herself looping around
the unlassoed fingers of malaise.

KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

I keep a lot to myself although as you say
I'm always giving pointed answers to pointed questions
what other kinds are there you say I said what's kept
is a kind of where I was yesterday for example
or a certain whine as I am quoting
although it seems otherwise than it might
but closer to my natural voice as you say it isn't
a crucial event but the actual words which I've kept for
such an occasion when what I've kept to myself
as if anyone would want to hear for any reason
except you sound so like yourself again.

JUBILEE

Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino

for Dr. Craig A. Martin

circle, from a tree
a palm, a chin, a knee, a trousers

rolled at the ankle, is stepping
a long remain, or welcome

Another boy
feelings of greeting, and fear

in alarm, or leap or certificate
trying and unable

or,
a lilt in theme, the addition of a scarf

out of August, roughly
in aptitude, in hand, taken, in hand

to table.
A gesture, or song, dividing oranges

and morning.
An open shirt. An open pocket.

EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS FROM *THE DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS*

David Widger

20s. in money, and what wine she needed, for the burying him
A mad merry slut she is
A real and not a complimentary acknowledgment
A good handsome wench I kissed, the first that I have seen
A fair salute on horseback, in Rochester streets, of the lady
A most conceited fellow and not over much in him
A conceited man, but of no Logique in his head at all
A vineyard, the first that ever I did see
A pretty man, I would be content to break a commandment with him
A lady spit backward upon me by a mistake
A gainful trade, but yet make me great trouble
A great baboon, but so much like a man in most things
A cat will be a cat still
A book the Bishops will not let be printed again
A woman sober, and no high-flyer, as he calls it
A most tedious, unreasonable, and impertinent sermon
About two o'clock, too late and too soon to go home to bed
About my new closet, for my mind is full of nothing but that
About the nature of sounds
Academy was dissolved by order of the Pope
Accounts I never did see, or hope again to see in my days
Act against Nonconformists and Papists
Advantage a man of the law hath over all other people
Afeard of being louzy
Afeard that my Lady Castlemaine will keep still with the King

Afraid now to bring in any accounts for journeys
After taking leave of my wife, which we could hardly do kindly
After awhile I caressed her and parted seeming friends
After many protestings by degrees I did arrive at what I would
After dinner my wife comes up to me and all friends again
After oysters, at first course, a hash of rabbits, a lamb
After some pleasant talk, my wife, Ashwell, and I to bed
Again that she spoke but somewhat of what she had in her heart
All ended in love
All the men were dead of the plague, and the ship cast ashore
All made much worse in their report among people than they are
All the fleas came to him and not to me
All divided that were bred so long at school together
All may see how slippery places all courtiers stand in
All things to be managed with faction
All the innocent pleasure in the world
All the towne almost going out of towne (Plague panic)
Ambassador—that he is an honest man sent to lie abroad
Amending of bad blood by borrowing from a better body
Among all the beauties there, my wife was thought the greatest
An exceeding pretty lass, and right for the sport
An offer of L500 for a Baronet's dignity
And the woman so silly, as to let her go that took it
And if ever I fall on it again, I deserve to be undone
And will not kiss a woman since his wife's death
And they did lay pigeons to his feet
And there, did what I would with her
And so to sleep till the morning, but was bit cruelly
And so to bed and there entertained her with great content
And all to dinner and sat down to the King saving myself
And feeling for a chamber-pott, there was none
And with the great men in curing of their claps

And so to bed, my father lying with me in Ashwell's bed
And so by coach, though hard to get it, being rainy, home
Angling with a minikin, a gut-string varnished over
Angry, and so continued till bed, and did not sleep friends
Anthem anything but instrumentall musique with the voice
Apprehend about one hundred Quakers
Aptness I have to be troubled at any thing that crosses me
Archbishop is a wench, and known to be so
As all other women, cry, and yet talk of other things
As he called it, the King's seventeenth whore abroad
As all things else did not come up to my expectations
Ashamed at myself for this losse of time
Asleep, while the wench sat mending my breeches by my bedside
At work, till I was almost blind, which makes my heart sad
At least 12 or 14,000 people in the street (to see the hanging)
At a loss whether it will be better for me to have him die
At last we pretty good friends
Bagwell's wife waited at the door, and went with me to my office
Baker's house in Pudding Lane, where the late great fire begun
Barkley swearing that he and others had lain with her often
Baseness and looseness of the Court
Bath at the top of his house
Beare-garden
Beating of a poor little dog to death, letting it lie
Because I would not be over sure of any thing
Before I sent my boy out with them, I beat him for a lie
Began discourse of my not getting of children
Beginnings of discontents take so much root between us
Begun to write idle and from the purpose
Begun to smell, and so I caused it to be set forth (corpse)
Being able to do little business (but the less the better)
Being there, and seeming to do something, while we do not

Being cleansed of lice this day by my wife
Being examined at Allgate, whether we were husbands and wives
Being sure never to see the like again in this world
Being the people that, at last, will be found the wisest
Being very poor and mean as to the bearing with trouble
Believe that England and France were once the same continent
Below what people think these great people say and do
Best fence against the Parliament's present fury is delay
Best poem that ever was wrote (Siege of Rhodes)
Better the musique, the more sicke it makes him
Better we think than most other couples do
Bill against importing Irish cattle
Bite at the stone, and not at the hand that flings it
Bleeding behind by leeches will cure him
Book itself, and both it and them not worth a turd
Bottle of strong water; whereof now and then a sip did me good
Bought for the love of the binding three books
Bought Montaigne's Essays, in English
Bowling-ally (where lords and ladies are now at bowles)
Boy up to-night for his sister to teach him to put me to bed
Bring me a periwig, but it was full of nits
Bringing over one discontented man, you raise up three
Bristol milk (the sherry) in the vaults
Broken sort of people, that have not much to lose
Burned it, that it might not be among my books to my shame
Business of abusing the Puritans begins to grow stale
But fit she should live where he hath a mind
But pretty! how I took another pretty woman for her
But she loves not that I should speak of Mrs. Pierce
But a woful rude rabble there was, and such noises
But how many years I cannot tell; but my wife says ten
But what they did, I did not enquire

But so fearful I am of discontenting my wife
 But do it with mighty vanity and talking
 But the wench went, and I believe had her turn served
 But I think I am not bound to discover myself
 But we were friends again as we are always
 But this the world believes, and so let them
 But if she will ruin herself, I cannot help it
 But my wife vexed, which vexed me
 But get no ground there yet
 Buy some roll-tobacco to smell to and chew
 Buying up of goods in case there should be war
 By his many words and no understanding, confound himself
 By chewing of tobacco is become very fat and sallow
 By and by met at her chamber, and there did what I would
 Called at a little ale-house, and had an eele pye
 Calling me dog and rogue, and that I had a rotten heart
 Came to bed to me, but all would not make me friends
 Cannot but be with the workmen to see things done to my mind
 Cannot bring myself to mind my business
 Cannot be clean to go so many bodies together in the same water
 Care not for his commands, and especially on Sundays
 Cast stones with his horne crooke
 Castlemayne is sicke again, people think, slipping her filly
 Caught cold yesterday by putting off my stockings
 Catholiques are everywhere and bold
 Certainly Annapolis must be defended,—where is Annapolis?
 Charles Barkeley's greatness is only his being pimp to the King
 Checking her last night in the coach in her long stories
 Chocolate was introduced into England about the year 1652
 Church, where a most insipid young coxcomb preached
 City to be burned, and the Papists to cut our throats
 City pay him great respect, and he the like to the meanest

Clean myself with warm water; my wife will have me
Comb my head clean, which I found so foul with powdering
Come to see them in bed together, on their wedding-night
Come to us out of bed in his furred mittens and furred cap
Compliment from my aunt, which I take kindly as it is unusual
Conceited, but that's no matter to me
Confidence, and vanity, and disparages everything
Confusion of years in the case of the months of January (etc.)
Consider that this is all the pleasure I live for in the world
Consult my pillow upon that and every great thing of my life
Contracted for her as if he had been buying a horse
Convenience of periwiggs is so great
Cost me £5, which troubles me, but yet do please me also
Costs me 12d. a kiss after the first
Could not saw above 4 inches of the stone in a day
Counterfeit mirth and pleasure with them, but had but little
Court is in a way to ruin all for their pleasures
Court attendance infinite tedious
Cruel custom of throwing at cocks on Shrove Tuesday
Cure of the King's evil, which he do deny altogether
Dash the brains of it out before the King's face
Day I first begun to go forth in my coat and sword
Declared, if he come, she would not live with me
Declared he will never have another public mistress again
Delight to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition
Deliver her from the hereditary curse of child-bearing
Desired me that I would baste his coate
Desk fastened to one of the armes of his chayre
Diana did not come according to our agreement
Did dig another, and put our wine in it; and I my Parmazan cheese
Did extremely beat him, and though it did trouble me to do it
Did so watch to see my wife put on drawers, which (she did)

Did take me up very prettily in one or two things that I said
 Did much insist upon the sin of adultery
 Did go to Shoe Lane to see a cocke-fighting at a new pit there
 Did find none of them within, which I was glad of
 Did tumble them all the afternoon as I pleased
 Did see the knaveries and tricks of jockeys
 Did not like that Clergy should meddle with matters of state
 Did put evil thoughts in me, but proceeded no further
 Did bear with it, and very pleasant all the while
 Did drink of the College beer, which is very good
 Dined with my wife on pease porridge and nothing else
 Dined upon six of my pigeons, which my wife has resolved to kill
 Dinner was great, and most neatly dressed
 Dinner, an ill and little mean one, with foul cloth and dishes
 Discontented that my wife do not go neater now she has two maids
 Discoursed much against a man's lying with his wife in Lent
 Discourging upon the sad condition of the times
 Disease making us more cruel to one another than if we are doggs
 Disorder in the pit by its raining in, from the cupola
 Disquiet all night, telling of the clock till it was daylight
 Do press for new oaths to be put upon men
 Do look upon me as a remembrancer of his former vanity
 Do bury still of the plague seven or eight in a day
 Dog attending us, which made us all merry again
 Dog, that would turn a sheep any way which
 Dominion of the Sea
 Down to the Whey house and drank some and eat some curds
 Dr. Calamy is this day sent to Newgate for preaching
 Drink a dish of coffee
 Drinking of the King's health upon their knees in the streets
 Driven down again with a stinke by Sir W. Pen's shying of a pot
 Duke of York and Mrs. Palmer did talk to one another very wanton

Duodecimal arithmetique

Durst not ask any body how it was with us

Durst not take notice of her, her husband being there

Dutch fleets being in so many places

Dying this last week of the plague 112, from 43 the week before

Eat some of the best cheese-cakes that ever I eat in my life

Eat a mouthful of pye at home to stay my stomach

Else he is a blockhead, and not fitt for that employment

Employed by the fencers to play prizes at

Enjoy some degree of pleasure now that we have health, money

Enough existed to build a ship (Pieces of the true Cross)

Enquiring into the selling of places do trouble a great many

Espinette is the French term for a small harpsichord

Evelyn, who cries out against it, and calls it bitchering

Even to the having bad words with my wife, and blows too

Ever have done his maister better service than to hang for him?

Every small thing is enough now-a-days to bring a difference

Every body is at a great losse and nobody can tell

Exceeding kind to me, more than usual, which makes me afeard

Exclaiming against men's wearing their hats on in the church

Excommunications, which they send upon the least occasions

Expected musique, the missing of which spoiled my dinner

Expressly taking care that nobody might see this business done

Faced white coat, made of one of my wife's pettycoates

Familiarity with her other servants is it that spoils them all

Family being all in mourning, doing him the greatest honour

Fanatiques do say that the end of the world is at hand

Fashion, the King says; he will never change

Fashionable and black spots

Fear all his kindness is but only his lust to her

Fear what would become of me if any real affliction should come

Fear of making her think me to be in a better condition

Fear I shall not be able to wipe my hands of him again
Fear she should prove honest and refuse and then tell my wife
Feared I might meet with some people that might know me
Fearful that I might not go far enough with my hat off
Fears some will stand for the tolerating of Papists
Fell to sleep as if angry
Fell a-crying for joy, being all maudlin and kissing one another
Fell to dancing, the first time that ever I did in my life
Fetch masts from New England
Find that now and then a little difference do no hurte
Finding my wife not sick, but yet out of order
Fire grow; and, as it grew darker, appeared more and more
First time that ever I heard the organs in a cathedral
First their apes, that they may be afterwards their slaves
First time I had given her leave to wear a black patch
Fixed that the year should commence in January instead of March
Fool's play with which all publick things are done
For my quiet would not enquire into it
For, for her part, she should not be buried in the commons
For I will not be inward with him that is open to another
For I will be hanged before I seek to him, unless I see I need
Force a man to swear against himself
Foretelling the draught of water of a ship before she be launche
Formerly say that the King was a bastard and his mother a whore
Found my brother John at eight o'clock in bed, which vexed me
Found him a fool, as he ever was, or worse
Found him not so ill as I thought that he had been ill
Found in my head and body about twenty lice, little and great
Found to be with child, do never stir out of their beds
Found guilty, and likely will be hanged (for stealing spoons)
France, which is accounted the best place for bread
Frequent trouble in things we deserve best in

Frogs and many insects do often fall from the sky, ready formed
From some fault in the meat to complain of my maid's sluttish
Gadding abroad to look after beauties
Gamester's life, which I see is very miserable, and poor
Gave him his morning draft
Generally with corruption, but most indeed with neglect
Gentlewomen did hold up their heads to be kissed by the King
Get his lady to trust herself with him into the tavern
Give the King of France Nova Scotia, which he do not like
Give her a Lobster and do so touse her and feel her all over
Give the other notice of the future state, if there was any
Glad to be at friendship with me, though we hate one another
God knows that I do not find honesty enough in my own mind
God forgive me! what thoughts and wishes I had
God help him, he wants bread.
God forgive me! what a mind I had to her
Goes down the wind in honour as well as every thing else
Goes with his guards with him publicly, and his trumpets
Good sport of the bull's tossing of the dogs
Good wine, and anchovies, and pickled oysters (for breakfast)
Good writers are not admired by the present
Got her upon my knee (the coach being full) and played with her
Great plot which was lately discovered in Ireland
Great thaw it is not for a man to walk the streets
Great deale of tittle tattle discourse to little purpose
Great many silly stories they tell of their sport
Great fire they saw in the City
Greater number of Counsellors is, the more confused the issue
Greatest businesses are done so superficially
Had a good supper of an ox's cheek
Had what pleasure almost I would with her
Had the umbles of it for dinner

Half a pint of Rhenish wine at the Still-yard, mixed with beer
Hand i' the cap
Hanged with a silken halter
Hanging jack to roast birds on
Hate in others, and more in myself, to be careless of keys
Hates to have any body mention what he had done the day before
Hath not a liberty of begging till he hath served three years
Hath sent me masters that do observe that I take pains
Hath given her the pox, but I hope it is not so
Have her come not as a sister in any respect, but as a servant
Have me get to be a Parliament-man the next Parliament
Have not much to lose, and therefore will venture all
Have been so long absent that I am ashamed to go
He that will not stoop for a pin, will never be worth a pound
He told me that he had so good spies
He made the great speech of his life, and spoke for three hours
He made but a poor sermon, but long
He has been inconvenienced by being too free in discourse
He hoped he should live to see her "ugly and willing"
He is too wise to be made a friend of
He was fain to lie in the priest's hole a good while
He and I lay in one press bed, there being two more
He was charged with making himself popular
He is a man of no worth in the world but compliment
He will do no good, he being a man of an unsettled head
Hear that the plague is come into the City
Hear something of the effects of our last meeting (pregnancy?)
Heeling her on one side to make her draw little water
Helping to slip their calves when there is occasion
Her months upon her is gone to bed
Her impudent tricks and ways of getting money
Here I first saw oranges grow

His enemies have done him as much good as he could wish
His readiness to speak spoilt all
His disease was the pox and that he must be fluxed (Rupert)
His satisfaction is nothing worth, it being easily got
His company ever wearys me
Holes for me to see from my closet into the great office
Horrid malicious bloody flame
Houses marked with a red cross upon the doors
How the Presbyterians would be angry if they durst
How little merit do prevail in the world, but only favour
How do the children?
How unhappily a man may fall into a necessity of bribing people
How natural it is for us to slight people out of power
How little to be presumed of in our greatest undertakings
Hugged, it being cold now in the mornings . . .
Hunt up and down with its mouth if you touch the cheek
I went in and kissed them, demanding it as a fee due
I could not forbear to love her exceedingly
I do not value her, or mind her as I ought
I did what I would, and might have done anything else
I never did observe so much of myself in my life
I broke wind and so came to some ease
I would fain have stolen a pretty dog that followed me
I have itched mightily these 6 or 7 days
I was as merry as I could counterfeit myself to be
I have a good mind to have the maidenhead of this girl
I know not how in the world to abstain from reading
I fear that it must be as it can, and not as I would
I had six noble dishes for them, dressed by a man-cook
I am not a man able to go through trouble, as other men
I find her painted, which makes me loathe her (cosmetics)
I did get her hand to me under my cloak

I having now seen a play every day this week
I was very angry, and resolve to beat him to-morrow
I know not yet what that is, and am ashamed to ask
I do not like his being angry and in debt both together to me
I will not by any over submission make myself cheap
I do not find other people so willing to do business as myself
I know I have made myself an immortal enemy by it
I calling her beggar, and she me pricklouse, which vexed me
I love the treason I hate the traitor
I would not enquire into anything, but let her talk
I kissed the bride in bed, and so the curtaines drawne
I went to the cook's and got a good joint of meat
I have promised, but know not when I shall perform
I met a dead corps of the plague, in the narrow ally
I am a foole to be troubled at it, since I cannot helpe it
I was exceeding free in dallying with her, and she not unfree
I was a great Roundhead when I was a boy
I pray God to make me able to pay for it.
I took a broom and basted her till she cried extremely
I never designed to be a witness against any man
If the word Inquisition be but mentioned
If the exportations exceed importations
If it should come in print my name maybe at it
Ill from my late cutting my hair so close to my head
Ill all this day by reason of the last night's debauch
Ill humour to be so against that which all the world cries up
In my nature am mighty unready to answer no to anything
In men's clothes, and had the best legs that ever I saw
In some churches there was hardly ten people in the whole church
In our graves (as Shakespeere resembles it) we could dream
In perpetual trouble and vexation that need it least
In comes Mr. North very sea-sick from shore
In my dining-room she was doing something upon the pott

In opposition to France, had made us throw off their fashion
Inconvenience that do attend the increase of a man's fortune
Inoffensive vanity of a man who loved to see himself in the glass
Instructed by Shakespeare himself
Inventing a better theory of musique
Ireland in a very distracted condition
Irish in Ireland, whom Cromwell had settled all in one corner
It must be the old ones that must do any good
It is a strange thing how fancy works
Jane going into the boat did fall down and show her arse
Jealous, though God knows I have no great reason
Jealousy of him and an ugly wench that lived there lately
Joyne the lion's skin to the fox's tail
Just set down to dinner, and I dined with them, as I intended
Justice of God in punishing men for the sins of their ancestors
King is at the command of any woman like a slave
King shall not be able to whip a cat
King was gone to play at Tennis
King do resolve to declare the Duke of Monmouth legitimate
King himself minding nothing but his ease
King is mighty kind to these his bastard children
King be desired to put all Catholiques out of employment
King still do doat upon his women, even beyond all shame
King of France did think other princes fit for nothing
King, "it is then but Mr. Pepys making of another speech to them"
King's service is undone, and those that trust him perish
King's Proclamation against drinking, swearing, and debauchery
Kingdom will fall back again to a commonwealth
Kiss my Parliament, instead of "Kiss my [rump]"
Kissed them myself very often with a great deal of mirth
L'escholle des filles, a lewd book
Lady Duchesse the veryest slut and drudge

Lady Castlemaine hath all the King's Christmas presents
Lady Batten to give me a spoonful of honey for my cold
Lady Castlemayne's nose out of joynt
Lady Castlemayne is now in a higher command over the King
Last day of their doubtfulness touching her being with child
Last act of friendship in telling me of my faults also
Last of a great many Presbyterian ministers
Lately too much given to seeing of plays, and expense
Laughing and jeering at every thing that looks strange
Law and severity were used against drunkennesse
Law against it signifies nothing in the world
Lay long caressing my wife and talking
Learned the multiplication table for the first time in 1661
Learnt a pretty trick to try whether a woman be a maid or no
Left him with some Commanders at the table taking tobacco
Let me blood, about sixteen ounces, I being exceedingly full
Let her brew as she has baked
Lewdness and beggary of the Court
Liberty of speech in the House
Listening to no reasoning for it, be it good or bad
Little pleasure now in a play, the company being but little
Little children employed, every one to do something
Little worth of this world, to buy it with so much pain
Live of £100 a year with more plenty, and wine and wenches
Long cloaks being now quite out
Long petticoat dragging under their men's coats
Look askew upon my wife, because my wife do not buckle to them
Looks to lie down about two months hence
Lord! to see the absurd nature of Englishmen
Lord! in the dullest insipid manner that ever lover did
Lust and wicked lives of the nuns heretofore in England
Luxury and looseness of the times

Lying a great while talking and sporting in bed with my wife
Made a lazy sermon, like a Presbyterian
Made to drink, that they might know him not to be a Roundhead
Made him admire my drawing a thing presently in shorthand
Man cannot live without playing the knave and dissimulation
Mankind pleasing themselves in the easy delights of the world
Many thousands in a little time go out of England
Many women now-a-days of mean sort in the streets, but no men
Mass, and some of their musique, which is not so contemptible
Matters in Ireland are full of discontent
Mazer or drinking-bowl turned out of some kind of wood
Mean, methinks, and is as if they had married like dog and bitch
Meazles, we fear, or, at least, of a scarlett feavour
Methought very ill, or else I am grown worse to please
Mightily pleased with myself for the business that I have done
Mighty fond in the stories she tells of her son Will
Milke, which I drank to take away, my heartburne
Mirrors which makes the room seem both bigger and lighter
Money I have not, nor can get
Montaigne is conscious that we are looking over his shoulder
Most homely widow, but young, and pretty rich, and good natured
Most of my time in looking upon Mrs. Butler
Mottoes inscribed on rings was of Roman origin
Mr. Evelyn's translating and sending me as a present
Mr. William Pen a Quaker again
Mrs. Lane was gone forth, and so I missed of my intent
Mrs. Stewart's sending the King his jewels again
Much difficulty to get pews, I offering the sexton money
Musique in the morning to call up our new-married people
Muske Millon
Must be forced to confess it to my wife, which troubles me
My wife after her bathing lying alone in another bed

My luck to meet with a sort of drolling workmen on all occasions
 My wife made great means to be friends, coming to my bedside
 My leg fell in a hole broke on the bridge
 My wife, coming up suddenly, did find me embracing the girl
 My wife hath something in her gizzard, that only waits
 My heart beginning to falsify in this business
 My old folly and childishnesse hangs upon me still
 My new silk suit, the first that ever I wore in my life
 My wife and I had some high words
 My wife was very unwilling to let me go forth
 My wife will keep to one another and let the world go hang
 My people do observe my minding my pleasure more than usual
 My wife this night troubled at my leaving her alone so much
 My wife was making of her tarts and larding of her pullets
 My head was not well with the wine that I drank to-day
 My great expense at the Coronacion
 My wife and I fell out
 My wife's neglect of things, and impertinent humour
 My wife and her maid Ashwell had between them spilled the pot. . . .
 My first attempt being to learn the multiplication-table
 My intention to learn to trill
 My wife was angry with me for not coming home, and for gadding
 My Jane's cutting off a carpenter's long mustacho
 My wife has got too great head to be brought down soon
 Nan at Moreclacke, very much pleased and merry with her
 Never laughed so in all my life. I laughed till my head ached
 Never, while he lives, truckle under any body or any faction
 Never was known to keep two mistresses in his life (Charles II.)
 Never could man say worse himself nor have worse said
 Never saw so many sit four hours together to hear any man
 New medall, where, in little, there is Mrs. Steward's face
 New Netherlands to English rule, under the title of New York

Night the Dutch burned our ships the King did sup with Castlemayne
No pleasure—only the variety of it
No money to do it with, nor anybody to trust us without it
No man knowing what to do, whether to sell or buy
No sense nor grammar, yet in as good words that ever I saw
Nobody being willing to trust us for anything
Nonconformists do now preach openly in houses
Nor would become obliged too much to any
Nor will yield that the Papists have any ground given them
Nor was there any pretty woman that I did see, but my wife
Not well, and so had no pleasure at all with my poor wife
Not the greatest wits, but the steady man
Not when we can, but when we list
Not to be censured if their necessities drive them to bad
Not had the confidence to take his lady once by the hand
Not permit her begin to do so, lest worse should follow
Not liking that it should lie long undone, for fear of death
Not being well pleased with her over free and loose company
Nothing in it approaching that single page in St. Simon
Nothing of the memory of a man, an houre after he is dead!
Nothing is to be got without offending God and the King
Now against her going into the country (lay together)
Now very big, and within a fortnight of lying down
Observing my eyes to be mightily employed in the playhouse
Offered to shew my wife further satisfaction if she desired
Offered to stop the fire near his house for such a reward
Once a week or so I know a gentleman must go . . .
One whom a great belly becomes as well as ever I saw any
Only wind do now and then torment me . . . extremely
Only because she sees it is the fashion (She likes it)
Ordered in the yarde six or eight bargemen to be whipped
Out also to and fro, to see and be seen

Out of an itch to look upon the sluts there
 Pain of the stone, and makes bloody water with great pain
 Pain to ride in a coach with them, for fear of being seen
 Painful to keep money, as well as to get it
 Parliament hath voted 2s. per annum for every chimney in England
 Parliament do agree to throw down Popery
 Parson is a cunning fellow he is as any of his coat
 Pen was then turned Quaker
 Periwigg he lately made me cleansed of its nits
 Persuade me that she should prove with child since last night
 Peruques of hair, as the fashion now is for ladies to wear
 Pest coaches and put her into it to carry her to a pest house
 Petition against hackney coaches
 Pictures of some Maids of Honor: good, but not like
 Pit, where the bears are baited
 Plague claimed 68,596 victims (in 1665)
 Plague, forty last night, the bell always going
 Play good, but spoiled with the ryme, which breaks the sense
 Play on the harpsicon, till she tired everybody
 Playing the fool with the lass of the house
 Pleased to look upon their pretty daughter
 Pleases them mightily, and me not at all
 Pleasures are not sweet to me now in the very enjoying of them
 Poor seamen that lie starving in the streets
 Posies for Rings, Handkerchers and Gloves
 Pray God give me a heart to fear a fall, and to prepare for it!
 Presbyterian style and the Independent are the best
 Presse seamen, without which we cannot really raise men
 Pressing in it as if none of us had like care with him
 Pretends to a resolution of being hereafter very clean
 Pretty sayings, which are generally like paradoxes
 Pretty to see the young pretty ladies dressed like men

Pride and debauchery of the present clergy
Prince's being trepanned, which was in doing just as we passed
Protestants as to the Church of Rome are wholly fanatiques
Proud, carping, insolent, and ironically-prophane stile
Proud that she shall come to trill
Providing against a foule day to get as much money into my hands
Quakers being charmed by a string about their wrists
Quakers and others that will not have any bell ring for them
Quite according to the fashion—nothing to drink or eat
Rabbit not half roasted, which made me angry with my wife
Railed bitterly ever and anon against John Calvin
Raising of our roofs higher to enlarge our houses
Rather hear a cat mew, than the best musique in the world
Reading to my wife and brother something in Chaucer
Reading my Latin grammar, which I perceive I have great need
Rejoiced over head and ears in this good newes
Removing goods from one burned house to another
Reparation for what we had embezzled
Requisite I be prepared against the man's friendship
Resolve to live well and die a beggar
Resolved to go through it, and it is too late to help it now
Resolving not to be bribed to dispatch business
Ridiculous nonsensical book set out by Will. Pen, for the Quaker
Rotten teeth and false, set in with wire
Rough notes were made to serve for a sort of account book
Run over their beads with one hand, and point and play and talk
Ryme, which breaks the sense
Sad sight it was: the whole City almost on fire
Sad for want of my wife, whom I love with all my heart
Said to die with the cleanest hands that ever any Lord Treasurer
Said that there hath been a design to poison the King
Sang till about twelve at night, with mighty pleasure

Sat before Mrs. Palmer, the King's mistress, and filled my eyes
Saw "Mackbeth," to our great content
Saw two battles of cocks, wherein is no great sport
Saw "The German Princess" acted, by the woman herself
Saw his people go up and down louseing themselves
Saying me to be the fittest man in England
Says, of all places, if there be hell, it is here
Says of wood, that it is an excrescence of the earth
Scotch song of "Barbary Allen"
Searchers with their rods in their hands
See a dead man lie floating upon the waters
See her look dejectedly and slighted by people already
See whether my wife did wear drawers to-day as she used to do
See how a good dinner and feasting reconciles everybody
See how time and example may alter a man
Seems she hath had long melancholy upon her
Send up and down for a nurse to take the girle home
Sent my wife to get a place to see Turner hanged
Sent me last night, as a bribe, a barrel of sturgeon
Sermon ended, and the church broke up, and my amours ended also
Sermon; but, it being a Presbyterian one, it was so long
Servant of the King's pleasures too, as well as business
Shame such a rogue should give me and all of us this trouble
She was so ill as to be shaved and pidgeons put to her feet
She begins not at all to take pleasure in me or study to please
She also washed my feet in a bath of herbs, and so to bed
She would not let him come to bed to her out of jealousy
She had six children by the King
She had the cunning to cry a great while, and talk and blubber
She had got and used some puppy-dog water
She hath got her teeth new done by La Roche
She loves to be taken dressing herself, as I always find her

She finds that I am lousy
Sheriffs did endeavour to get one jewell
Should alway take somebody with me, or her herself
Show many the strangest emotions to shift off his drink
Shows how unfit I am for trouble
Shy of any warr hereafter, or to prepare better for it
Sicke men that are recovered, they lying before our office doors
Silence; it being seldom any wrong to a man to say nothing
Singing with many voices is not singing
Sir W. Pen was so fuddled that we could not try him to play
Sir W. Pen did it like a base raskall, and so I shall remember
Sit up till 2 o'clock that she may call the wench up to wash
Slabbering themselves, and mirth fit for clownes
Slight answer, at which I did give him two boxes on the ears
Smoke jack consists of a wind-wheel fixed in the chimney
So home, and mighty friends with my wife again
So great a trouble is fear
So to bed, to be up betimes by the helpe of a larum watch
So much is it against my nature to owe anything to any body
So home to supper and bed with my father
So I took occasion to go up and to bed in a pet
So to bed in some little discontent, but no words from me
So home and to supper with beans and bacon and to bed
So we went to bed and lay all night in a quarrel
So much wine, that I was even almost foxed
So good a nature that he cannot deny any thing
So the children and I rose and dined by ourselves
So home and to bed, where my wife had not lain a great while
So out, and lost our way, which made me vexed
So every thing stands still for money
Softly up to see whether any of the beds were out of order or no
Some merry talk with a plain bold maid of the house

Some ends of my own in what advice I do give her
 Sorry for doing it now, because of obliging me to do the like
 Sorry to hear that Sir W. Pen's maid Betty was gone away
 Sorry thing to be a poor King
 Sparrowgrass
 Speaks rarely, which pleases me mightily
 Spends his time here most, playing at bowles
 Sport to me to see him so earnest on so little occasion
 Sporting in my fancy with the Queen
 Staid two hours with her kissing her, but nothing more
 Statute against selling of offices
 Staying out late, and painting in the absence of her husband
 Strange slavery that I stand in to beauty
 Strange things he has been found guilty of, not fit to name
 Street ordered to be continued, forty feet broad, from Paul's
 Subject to be put into a disarray upon very small occasions
 Such open flattery is beastly
 Suffered her humour to spend, till we begun to be very quiet
 Suspect the badness of the peace we shall make
 Swear they will not go to be killed and have no pay
 Take pins out of her pocket to prick me if I should touch her
 Talk very highly of liberty of conscience
 Taught my wife some part of subtraction
 Tax the same man in three or four several capacities
 Tear all that I found either boyish or not to be worth keeping
 Tell me that I speak in my dreams
 That I might not seem to be afeared
 That I may have nothing by me but what is worth keeping
 That I might say I saw no money in the paper
 That I may look as a man minding business
 That hair by hair had his horse's tail pulled off indeed
 The gentlemen captains will undo us

The very rum man must have £200
The gates of the City shut, it being so late
The manner of the gaming
The boy is well, and offers to be searched
The devil being too cunning to discourage a gamester
The monkey loose, which did anger me, and so I did strike her
The most ingenious men may sometimes be mistaken
The barber came to trim me and wash me
The house was full of citizens, and so the less pleasant
The plague is got to Amsterdam, brought by a ship from Argier
The pleasure of my not committing these things to my memory
The world do not grow old at all
The ceremonies did not please me, they do so overdo them
Their ladies in the box, being grown mighty kind of a sudden
Their condition was a little below my present state
Then to church to a tedious sermon
Then home, and merry with my wife
Thence by coach, with a mad coachman, that drove like mad
Thence to Mrs. Martin's, and did what I would with her
There is no passing but by coach in the streets, and hardly that
There did see Mrs. Lane. . .
There eat and drank, and had my pleasure of her twice
There did 'tout ce que je voudrais avec' her
There setting a poor man to keep my place
There is no man almost in the City cares a turd for him
There being no curse in the world so great as this
There being ten hanged, drawn, and quartered
These young Lords are not fit to do any service abroad
These Lords are hard to be trusted
They are all mad; and thus the kingdom is governed!
They were so false spelt that I was ashamed of them
They say now a common mistress to the King

They were not occupiers, but occupied (women)
They want where to set their feet, to begin to do any thing
Things being dear and little attendance to be had we went away
Think that we are beaten in every respect
Thinks she is with child, but I neither believe nor desire it
This day churched, her month of childbed being out
This absence makes us a little strange instead of more fond
This week made a vow to myself to drink no wine this week
This day I began to put on buckles to my shoes
This is the use we make of our fathers
This kind of prophane, mad entertainment they give themselves
Those absent from prayers were to pay a forfeit
Those bred in the North among the colliers are good for labour
Though it be but little, yet I do get ground every month
Though I know it will set the Office and me by the ears for ever
Though he knows, if he be not a fool, that I love him not
Through my wife's illness had a bad night of it, and she a worse
Thus it was my chance to see the King beheaded at White Hall
Tied our men back to back, and thrown them all into the sea
Till 12 at night, and then home to supper and to bed
To Mr. Holliard's in the morning, thinking to be let blood
To bed with discontent she yielded to me and began to be fond
To bed, after washing my legs and feet with warm water
To my joy, I met not with any that have sped better than myself
To my Lord Sandwich, thinking to have dined there
To be enjoyed while we are young and capable of these joys
To be so much in love of plays
To see Major-general Harrison hanged, drawn; and quartered
To the Swan and drank our morning draft
To see the bride put to bed
Told us he had not been in a bed in the whole seven years
Too late for them to enjoy it with any pleasure
Too much ill newes true, to afflict ourselves with uncertain

Took occasion to fall out with my wife very highly
Took physique, and it did work very well
Tooke my wife well dressed into the Hall to see and be seen
Towzing her and doing what I would, but the last thing of all. . . .
Travels over the high hills in Asia above the clouds
Trouble, and more money, to every Watch, to them to drink
Troubled to see my father so much decay of a suddain
Troubled to think what trouble a rogue may without cause give
Trumpets were brought under the scaffold that he not be heard
Turn out every man that will be drunk, they must turn out all
Two shops in three, if not more, generally shut up
Uncertainty of all history
Uncertainty of beauty
Unless my too-much addiction to pleasure undo me
Unquiet which her ripping up of old faults will give me
Up, leaving my wife in bed, being sick of her months
Up, finding our beds good, but lousy; which made us merry
Up and took physique, but such as to go abroad with
Upon the leads gazing upon Diana
Upon a small temptation I could be false to her
Very high and very foule words from her to me
Very angry we were, but quickly friends again
Very great tax; but yet I do think it is so perplexed
Waked this morning between four and five by my blackbird
Wanton as ever she was, with much I made myself merry and away
Was kissing my wife, which I did not like
We having no luck in maids now-a-days
We find the two young ladies come home, and their patches off
We do nothing in this office like people able to carry on a warr
We do naturally all love the Spanish, and hate the French
We are to go to law never to revenge, but only to repayre
Weary of it; but it will please the citizens

Weather being very wet and hot to keep meat in.
Wedding for which the posy ring was required
Weeping to myself for grief, which she discerning, come to bed
Weigh him after he had done playing
Well enough pleased this morning with their night's lodging
Went against me to have my wife and servants look upon them
Went to bed with my head not well by my too much drinking to-day
What I said would not hold water
What I had writ foule in short hand
What itching desire I did endeavour to see Bagwell's wife
What wine you drinke, lett it bee at meales
What people will do tomorrow
What they all, through profit or fear, did promise
What silly discourse we had by the way as to love-matters
What is there more to be had of a woman than the possessing her
Whatever I do give to anybody else, I shall give her
When she least shews it hath her wit at work
When the candle is going out, how they bawl and dispute
Where a pedlar was in bed, and made him rise
Where a trade hath once been and do decay, it never recovers
Wherein every party has laboured to cheat another
Wherewith to give every body something for their pains
Whether she suspected anything or no I know not
Which may teach me how I make others wait
Which he left him in the lurch
Which I did give him some hope of, though I never intend it
Whip this child till the blood come, if it were my child!
Whip a boy at each place they stop at in their procession
Who continues so ill as not to be troubled with business
Who we found ill still, but he do make very much of it
Who must except against every thing and remedy nothing
Who seems so inquisitive when my, house will be made an end of

Who is over head and cares in getting her house up
Whom, in mirth to us, he calls Antichrist
Whom I find in bed, and pretended a little not well
Whose red nose makes me ashamed to be seen with him
Whose voice I am not to be reconciled
Wife that brings me nothing almost (besides a comely person)
Wife and the dancing-master alone above, not dancing but talking
Will upon occasion serve for a fine withdrawing room
Will put Madam Castlemaine's nose out of joynt
Willing to receive a bribe if it were offered me
Wine, new and old, with labells pasted upon each bottle
Wise man's not being wise at all times
With hangings not fit to be seen with mine
With egg to keep off the glaring of the light
With my whip did whip him till I was not able to stir
With a shower of hail as big as walnuts
Without importunity or the contrary
Woman with a rod in her hand keeping time to the musique
Wonders that she cannot be as good within as she is fair without
Work that is not made the work of any one man
World sees now the use of them for shelter of men (fore-castles)
Would make a dogg laugh
Would not make my coming troublesome to any
Wretch, n., often used as an expression of endearment
Ye pulling down of houses, in ye way of ye fire
Yet let him remember the days of darkness
Yet it was her fault not to see that I did take them
Young man play the foole upon the doctrine of purgatory
Young fellow, with his hat cocked like a fool behind

BLOSSOM AND BLOOD

Tomaž Šalamun

I'm the fruit whose skin breaks,
a container grabbed with a crane.
Gulls are bloodthirsty and hungry.
Their plucked feathers descend
as I climb. Booms, silky booms
in the frozen boat's throat, between
the sliding rusty doors of the tanker.
What do I do here if my seal breaks?
How should I grease my black and blue shoulders?
Hey, little stoker, I squeezed your head
under the ceiling for I started to breathe.
Your limbs smashed on brown metal
cannot be washed away. A mosquito is caught in oil.
They nail the box Illyria on a stick
and when the lid is pressed to the ceiling
where should it go if not inside? You resemble
an old fly's turd looking partly gray on a light bulb.
Shall we throw spears? I don't have a tool.
And the huge trunk with a pulley coming closer
owns nothing. I'm shifted around.
Machines are putting me on the other dock.
And from there a train through
dark tunnels and damp gorges
or in the sun, sun among wheat spikes,
an hour before the arch goes out and the lights
of cars and houses ignite. How should I

remember you, little stoker. I'm almost
unloaded. Only a lintel or two,
only a distance traveled on foot and then
that closeness with the heart shown by your
hand. A span. A span. You slap wood
as if a piano, you measure the tone.
Such sweet sounds Pythagoras takes.

—translated from the Slovenian by the author and Peter Richards

NATIONS

Nations who stop telling their story
die. Scented with oil, they are the direct
access to the heart of the world.
They don't feel like making circles
or running barefoot in the snow, anymore.
Nations who stop telling their story
do not tremble under the weight
of incomprehensible powers, they
themselves are the stars
that are before them, they
themselves become stars,
the nations who live in grace and luxury.
They wake up to a handsome young
Arab who lies on the left side of them.
While he dances and talks they make
love to him, morning and evening.
They spread their almighty tent over him,
the nations who stop
telling their story.
The nations who stop telling their
story are simply wiped out by
lust, their elegant and unimportant
life is of interest only to the knife
of the horsemen, the buddies who sent
Hassan.

—translated from the Slovenian by the author and Phillis Levin

A FIELD GUIDE TO VERBS (#4)

Molly McQuade

HURRY

With respect to time, many have measured. "The pivots are jewelled, as far as the third wheel, with ruby and diamond endstones," cautions Britten in *OLD CLOCKS AND WATCHES* (London, 1899).

The clock and watch makers have contrived, over time, to improve on our dynamic of losing. For with every passing second, they fasten—what to what? The smallest fillip of brass to its inevitable spouse. And they stroke the exact interstices; place pulleys; enable gears to govern. They make sensate the once untouched, answer our perplexed bodily hunger for time.

The glimmering dials, the placid fonts of numbers rimming the watch faces—the musing chorale of timekeeping in its chants and howls—that is luxury. We know the time even when, as now, we cannot see the sun, or distinctly hear our blood lurch and fall; and the hour festers comely, with a dignity. We cannot allay, we cannot allay, so let's hurry to precede ourselves cresting the moment. With us we'll carry all the watch makers:

Francis Shuttleworth
Giles Vangaland
Charles Wrench
George Fishwick
Henry Mountlow
Richard Crump

Christiana Beeg
Guillaume Duru
Ahasuerus Fromanteel
George Mudge
Jonah Boddle
J. Bor
James Foggo
John Flower

A FIELD GUIDE TO VERBS (#7)

WON'T WALK

The reason I have stopped walking down there: St. Paul Street, where no moral crime occurs but everybody spits.

Actually, spitting is the only accurate metaphor I could select for Baltimore.

They spit on St. Paul Street from their third-storey row house windows, peering at the street, waiting for the right head, and then aiming. (They rarely hit.) Although being spat on may not compare with being slugged while walking the street, it is still something.

I wonder whether there is any sport in it. I wonder if they spit every day, in good weather, at least so long as they can bear to open a window and lean out of it while naked (or almost naked—I'm not omniscient). Do they pick certain pedestrians as their favorites? Are they disappointed when someone they covet hardly ever emerges from car or home or bus to display the wanton pate, waiting for the aerial zoom and glop?

Do they practice? Is it harder to spit from a window, or merely safer, because although they can take credit for doing it, no one in the lackadaisical kingdom of combat that is Balto would ever bother to chase them upstairs afterward to a wholly understated lair?

Do they spit when it is raining, or would that seem repetitious?

Do they spit to wage an enmity, complete with a plot line, or do they improvise?

Would they spit on a poodle, or would that seem lachrymose?

Have they all been spat on? Is that a necessary part of the training?

In some ways, I prefer being slugged to being spat on. I was slugged during one of my Baltimore walks. Another neighborhood, not mine. Ordinary weekday throngs. Around 2 p.m. He didn't know me; I didn't know him. I was innocuous. He was sane.

BLIND HUBER (XIII)

Nick Flynn

Thus transfixed, stare blank at one

immovable thing, ocean

or statue, fifty years thus, to see

if it moves. Burnens

covers the walls with prepressed

comb, factory-punched,

so we can live inside a hive,

my chair dead-center, beside my

queen. Chain after chain

of bodies, a fabric

above, lowering. Forty days

I sat, until the comb began

to press into my chest. Burnens
brought water at first, described their
labors, the tomb being built.

When he could no longer join me
I lived on what honey fell

to my lips. I wanted to see
if the hive moved,

& it did,
but not as much as I had hoped.

INTERVIEW WITH C.D. WRIGHT

C.D. Wright was born and raised in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. She has published ten collections of poetry, including *Steal Away: New and Selected Poems*; *Deepstep Come Shining* (1998); *Tremble* (1996); *Just Whistle* (1993); *String Light* (1991), which won the Poetry Center Book Award; *Further Adventures with You* (1986); and *Translation of the Gospel Back into Tongues* (1981). Her next book, a collaboration with photographer Deborah Luster titled *One Big Self: Prisoners of Louisiana*, is forthcoming. She has also published two state literary maps—one for Arkansas and one for Rhode Island. Wright has received two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Foundation, and the Bunting Institute. Her many awards include the Witter Bynner Prize, a Whiting Writers' Award, and a Lannan Literary Award. In 1994 she was named Poet Laureate of Rhode Island. She teaches at Brown University and edits Lost Roads Publishers with her husband, the poet Forrest Gander. This interview was conducted by Robert N. Casper and Nadia Colburn on March 30, 2002.

How did you come to poetry?

When I was an undergraduate I didn't know I wanted to be a poet—I just knew I wanted to be an American artist. I tried on a lot of things, most of which I wasn't particularly good at: saxophone, and mime, and ballet. I would have loved to have been a painter (I would still love to be a painter!) but I didn't try that. What I had some proclivity for and facility with was language. I seemed to avoid committing to it as long as I could, though I ate books, I just ate them. When I was seventeen I met a ferocious autodidact. She had an Irish and German Catholic upbringing from Kentucky, and she knew all of the Irish and German writers, the Catholics. She turned me on to everyone from Hopkins to Joyce. It wasn't until I went to graduate

school in Arkansas that I really started reading contemporary poetry. The poet whose work I fell deepest into was Frank Stanford's. His poems were very potent, romantic, mysterious. I recognized that very idiom, that very landscape. And he was my age, he was already doing it—I didn't have to die, become a man or a Catholic from across the waves to become a poet. Living proof was important to me.

When you first became interested in poetry you thought it was removed from you?

I thought it was something made elsewhere, essentially a European export. I thought writers didn't come from my place, that it couldn't yield that. Nothing in the library told me my beloved backwater yielded its own literature. Stanford's work was the unbeatable proof of otherwise.

Do you read mostly contemporary poetry, or older poetry? Are there certain poets you always return to?

My reading changes all the time. There were periods when I was cycling the same poets. Now I'll read anything, and I also won't read anything. I have to be taken in deep really fast or I won't read it. I don't care where it comes from. It has to have a title, but I'd just as soon it did not have a name attached. There are poets I could say are really important to me, but then I almost have to question if that's true. It's really books: Erin Moure's *Sheepish Love*, Civilian Beauty, Evan S. Connell's *Notes Found in a Bottle on a Beach at Carmel*, Arthur Sze's *River River*, Philip Foss's *Composition of Glass*, Mei Mei Berssenbrugge's *Empathy*, Forrest's *Deeds of Utmost Kindness*, David Antin's *Tuning*, Merwin's *Notes on An Unfinished Accompaniment*, Michael Ondaatje's *Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, Ron Silliman's *Ketjak*, Creeley's *For Love*, Bronk's *Life Supports*, Bernadette Mayer's *Midwinter Day*, Cole Swensen's *Park*, Frank Stanford's *Constant Stranger*, Palmer's *Notes From Echo Lake*, Lorine Niedecker's *The Granite Pail*, Oppen's *Selected*, Frank O'Hara's *Selected*, Forche's *The Country Between Us*, Lyn Hejinian's *My Life*, Jacques Roubaud's *Some Thing Black*. Even

the poets I love—it's usually the one title that affected me first and foremost. After that I'm along for the ride, and I can continue to be astonished. But that first hit is what clobbers me, and sometimes a later work, such as Ashbery's *Flow Chart* and Merwin's *The Folding Cliffs*, and Ondaatje's *Handwriting*, etc. will keep giving back to you in their fullness.

You've said, "I'm not a reliable critic, even for my own purposes." Does that unreliability keep you open as a reader, and as a writer?

I don't want to shut down. You see a recoiling from the adventure of new writing happening to people, and it's not a place where I want to settle. Also, I remember in some recent interview I talked about coming to love Donald Judd's work. When I was twenty-one I got a job at Park-Bernet Galleries, and pretty soon into the job we had a contemporary art show I did not like one bit. Most of all, I didn't like the work of Dan Flavin, Claes Oldenberg, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns—I had never seen any of that stuff, and it all just looked ridiculous to me. However, over time I found that when I went to a museum I started going toward the new stuff, especially Donald Judd's work, which did nothing except be there, you know. It was cool and beautiful, but it just didn't evoke any references for me, and so I felt like I could be still, could be quiet with just a few copper boxes. And I feel like I look for that in writing too—somewhere I can get a clearing so that I can see something that I haven't seen before. It's very hard to find that clearing. You also asked if I read from the past, and I do. In poetry it took a long time before I became interested in the past; in prose it didn't. I love the nineteenth century, and I'd be happy to just stay there in prose. To read Hardy. But in poetry it took me a while to go back. I felt too behind to go backward.

Do you remember that moment?

No, I just needed more than my contemporaries to sustain me.

Do you think about your audience, or who you'd like your audience to be?

Like any writer, I want the writers that I like to read to like my work. And then I want really smart, unusual people to like my work. I want people that I'd want to spend time with to like my work. And I want strangers who are in very lost places to like my work. But no writer writes to that audience when writing. For the last ten years I've worked a lot with a photographer, so my environment is whatever project we're working on. I work on projects.

Could you talk about the relationship between the visible world and poetry?

It is similar to looking for that clearing, except you are actually trying to see something the way somebody else is seeing it, at the same time they are trying to see the way you're seeing it, and an intense dialogue is going on around what both are seeing. Mechanically, technically, I do not know what is going on in photography, but I like to look, and there are a number of photographers whose work I really admire. Still, when they tell me how they do what they do, it does not adhere. So on the one hand my interest goes to the surface, and the framing of that surface, and on the other hand I work toward an interiority which speaks to my own hungry soul. Every medium has its own lines of influence, just as they all have common underpinnings. If I was working with a filmmaker, it would be very different than working with someone who does still images. This way, I make the movable parts.

How did Deepstep Come Shining come about?

That book came out of a road trip I took with the photographer Deborah Luster, with the idea of writing a book about the dreams of the blind. Her idea. I don't remember what triggered it. We decided to go forward by visiting outsider artists—to try to expose the reaches of seeing, of not seeing, visions, dreams. Debbie's husband, who is a folklorist, laid out an itinerary

for us, and we talked and read a lot on the road. We went through North and South Carolina and Northern Georgia. We ended at Paradise Garden and wended our way back to Wilmington. I didn't interview people, but I did a lot of reading about blindness, and sightedness, and pulled one very special book off a library shelf in some small town where we spent the night.

What book was that?

In English it is *Eclipse, a Nightmare*—I can't remember the French title, but it wasn't the same thing. The author, a Frenchman named Hugues DeMontalembert, was an aristocrat, but more importantly, a painter. He is likely still living—maybe in his upper sixties. The book is about him losing his sight. He was living in New York, and one night he came back to his apartment while it was being robbed. To get away, the robbers threw whatever was available—bleach or grease or acid—in his face, and it blinded him. Totally. Forever and ever. It is a very beautiful book—nothing else I read came close. When I have a subject, there's often one or two books that have the most bearing, the most influence. Not necessarily the best book, but its movement, its pictures, its character makes me realize, "Oh, I understand. I understand this now." In the case of *Eclipse, a Nightmare*, it was the articulation of his passage from being a totally visual person—that being the foreground of his existence—to being blind, as he was beginning to live it.

Does Deepstep Come Shining come out of the tradition of the blind prophet/poet?

I assumed that piece was just there. I didn't exploit the Homeric tradition, or Milton, but there is a thread of Gloucester from *Lear* in the book. I could have done more, but I focused on other things instead. There was a Fine Arts library where I ended up staying to finish the book. I read randomly from the shelves. It was one of those rare points where everything seems to exist to be in the book—to paraphrase Mallarme, I think.

Deepstep Come Shining was willing to contain different voices and dictions and references, and yet it still manages to have a unified tone and movement.

Levels of diction have always interested me. I like the trashy stuff and I like the archaic, and the arcane, the Latinate, the Teutonic, the idiomatic. I really love my language, English, in its bastard form, American English.

You've talked about composing Deepstep Come Shining by taping drafts and pieces onto a wall, then working with them as though they were part of a painting or a collage. Did this method affect the book's structure?

Yes. I was at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. I put the poems up in columns on the wall of my studio and pretended I was a painter, since I wanted to be a painter. I started creating pieces so that the columns spoke to each other, and that was major fun. Then I saw patterns in the work, and cranked those patterns up, popped them out. Because it was on the wall I could see the connections—much easier than trying to keep every thread in my head.

Have you had other writing or organizing techniques for other books?

Nothing as serendipitous as that one. I can't remember how I did *Just Whistle*, but at some point I started getting the feeling that I was in a groove that was not just about inertia or momentum, but a formal groove. Once I became conscious of it I started trying to exploit that, maximize the formal opportunities when I felt there were gains to be had.

Your last two books move into a more open form. . .

The first form-driven book I wrote is *Just Whistle*. I think it was a result of having been exposed to language poetry—before that, I wasn't very self-conscious about form other than knowing I didn't like writing in traditional

European forms, didn't like what I made with them. I knew this early on. Then I moved to California, where people were obsessed with form. They were steeped in Russian Formalism, French theory, etc. They were shooting to overhaul the language. An ambitious, provocative, and ultimately doomed undertaking. It was impossible not to wrestle with the issues they flushed out regardless of which way you fell. So I started obsessing with form, and now it's a part of my concern. I'm through with the obsession. I also realize that you can't get anywhere without form, especially when you work with longer texts. You can go farther and detach more the more fitting the form.

What do you mean by "detach?"

Part of it has to do with tackling form, part of it has to do with living more and reading more, and part of it has to do with distance, geographical and temporal distance from my original sources of writing. I am more sophisticated—and more stupid too—than I used to be. The writing loses its innocence, and serendipitous moves decrease in frequency. Other qualities are gladly behind you—certain excesses, the weight of an identifiable influence, tonal irregularities.

Do you feel that Arkansas is a more ghostly landscape for you now, having lived on the East Coast for so long?

I relate to it differently. It is a fixture in my mindscape, but I didn't stay local in every respect. I always think of a Miles Davis quote, "People who don't change end up like folk musicians playing in museums, local as a mother-fucker." I am permanently attached to where I came from, and keen on my home as a language source. But it's not the only one for me anymore, and while I wouldn't call it ghostly, I'd call it long-distanced. My ear has been licked by so many other tongues. I think the biggest break was from *String Light* to *Just Whistle*. I wrote from a place that didn't have anything to do with geography and the vocabulary attached to that geography. Instead, I wrote

out of a calculated vocabulary, and a psychic pain that I had to give shape to or else I was going to make a big mess. I deployed medical terms and recalled my Hopkins. Those forces, chosen and unchosen, took me a greater distance than I would have crossed otherwise. *String Light* was the first book I wrote in which I had a sense of a composition to the whole, which doesn't mean I had a sense of myself as a whole. In *Tremble* I wanted to see if I could be a lyric poet, so I tried to put more pressure on the language, purge the excess that I'm often willing to include. I wanted to see if I could actually write a line, you know. The phrase, the sentence, the pacing—those are all caught up with lineation, and I have a lot to learn yet. I just finished this prison project with Deborah Luster, and I'm not even sure what genre my part plays. A big part of the new energy in writing comes from overriding genre distinctions.

The genre of poetry?

Pure poetry all the time, it's wearing. Why can't we just write? It's so self-conscious. I'm so tired of the sect of poetry. I want my work to be exploratory and animate and profound, I want to touch my dreams. It's a big horizon, and I don't know if I can get there writing unadulterated poetry.

How did your collaboration with Deborah Luster, the forthcoming One Big Self, work out? If it's not poetry, what is it?

The text for the prison book is about eighty pages. The original publisher didn't want so much text, so I cannibalized it: took two-thirds out, broke the rest into paragraphs, and tried to make it more essayistic. I really didn't like the process, but I was willing to do it because I was excited about the book, and excited about publishing it with Deborah. We didn't know if we could, since photography-based presses seem allergic to text, and literary presses can't handle the cost or the design of a photographic book. Then, for different reasons it got pulled from the first publisher, and we went to

another press that had no problem with either the photography or the text. I got to go back to the original text, which was my preference.

When you met the prisoners, what did you have to say? What did you have to ask them?

I didn't interview people—we just talked. We were in the South, you know. People talk there. You talk, they talk back. Also, prisoners doing hard time usually have a limited number of visitors, so they're dying to talk to somebody new. It was just conversation. I couldn't go as often to the prisons as Deborah did—I only got to go three times, to three prisons. So I got what I could in those visits, from those encounters. I also have a correspondence with several inmates.

Did you find that the actual visits, the correspondence, and the photographs all had a different effect on your writing? Was one more generative?

Well, conversation was the most generative for me, because there's nothing more compelling than the human voice. Then the correspondence—the more you read, the more you know about the prisoners and their conditions, and the harder it gets. The correspondence put other demands on the work and offered more ways to reference, more things to think about: the kinds of incarceration, the level, the rate of incarceration, the time. You think a lot about time, counting and marking time. And what else? You think about the total self-involvement isolated time entails. What choice do you have? And how did that affect the writing? I don't know. . . .

Wasn't your father a judge?

My father was a chancery and probate judge, and then on the state court of appeals. He didn't do criminal stuff for the most part. However, Debbie's mother was murdered, which was an undertow in the work. I read the transcript from her mother's murderer's trial.

Did you find that that affected you? I imagine it affected her a lot.

It was very chilling. I think she was more objective than I was. She had been working it out for a decade, and I just sort of collided with that reality.

I imagine it was complicated to work with prisoners—complicated to relate to them and also their victims, their crimes.

Unspeakable things. But keep in mind, most of the inmates committed their crimes when they were young. I met inmates who were knitting, who had had colostomies and didn't have any teeth left, men who watched soap operas and read romance novels, and couldn't be separated from their Bibles. They weren't the same people they were when they went in. They were just poor, lonely, and old. The whole impetus behind the project was to affirm every single body as a whole person. It's true—it's not hard to accept. In fact, the first day after we left Angola, Debbie was driving—she always had to drive—and I said, "You know, those are the nicest people I've ever met in my life." And Debbie almost ran off the road. I mean, Angola is a maximum security prison, where eighty-nine percent of the inmates never leave. It was a stupid thing to say, although we were treated very graciously and respectfully by everyone we met.

What were the prison conditions like?

At Angola they are comparatively good. It used to be one of the most notoriously horrible, brutal prisons—as heinous as anything any "criminal mind" could have conceived. Beastly, but it is probably one of the best now. Which doesn't mean ugly stuff doesn't go down every day, and even if it was going down while I was on the grounds, I wasn't going to be a witness. But, no, it's very well run, in a kind of Evangelical way. And there are a host of social and self-help clubs and educational and skill courses available, even offering an accredited degree in divinity. However, it's very anachronistic. If

an inmate can make a wagon wheel from scratch for the caisson built from scratch for their own funeral processions, you are a carpenter, but that doesn't exactly prepare you for employment in the twenty-first century.

When you were writing, were you aware of the prisoners as an audience?

Yes, and Debbie even more so. She'd do two dozen shots of each person, develop them and redo them. We had associations with all those people, information about them, and every time I crossed an ambivalent line she said, "What if so-and-so reads this? How will he feel?" She would say this even if so-and-so were functionally illiterate. She was very intent that we be non-partisan. I think of myself as a realist at core. It was still crucial to remind myself that the book we were making was theirs, just as she photographed them the way they chose to be photographed. The inmates were sending their copies of the prints to their sweethearts, mothers, children, grandchildren. They were making contact, wooing and consoling and ensuring their remembrance in these pictures.

Did you find that that kind of literal limitation had an interesting effect on your writing?

What I was up against was the sticky and stimulating nature of the project. What can poetry do. When I first thought about it, it seemed dumb to go to prisons and write poems. So then the question became, "What can my language do?" It was hard for me to resist the challenge.

Did you come up with any answers? Or, did it seem like the line in Tremble: "And this feels painfully beautiful, whether or not it will change the world one drop."

The numbers are against us in terms of readers for poetry to effect change in any dramatic way. But, critical thinking and critical writing—to which poetry is a profound party—effect change, and if there aren't people doing that, then I don't know if anything worthwhile can happen. It's not the back

work, but it's the head work that has to be done before people start doing things differently—such as putting the resources at the front end of lives instead of blowing it on the failure of mass, unending incarceration.

How do you avoid being polemical in your work?

I try to make the language work harder to be sharp, not sentimental or didactic; to accede to the place where I want it to enter. I aim to train the energy in the language, and I have learned to cut it with tenderness, or distance or opacity, or humor. Humor is a good weapon; in fact, it's my weapon of choice. I could easily just be broadcasting, since I've always been pissed off.

Could you talk about Lost Roads, the press you run with your husband?

We barely do it now. You're writing, you're teaching, you're editing, you're paying the bills, you're having a relationship. Then, when you throw a kid into the mix, something like a press is really hard to do, unless one partner doesn't also have a full-time job, in which case there's more flexibility. The press was started by Frank Stanford because there was no forum for the writers he knew and liked, the poets in his community. I got involved in the press with him. After his death I sold the equipment and moved to San Francisco. A few years later Forrest got involved. Before Brecht's birth, we did six books a year, sometimes seven, sometimes as many as nine. Then it became three or one or none. Most presses and most magazines run a course which is tied to the original editor's vision and resources, and as your life gets more complicated it becomes harder to sustain and just as hard to pass on. But it's very important to do these things, and satisfying in and of itself. For me, doing Lost Roads was partly discovery, partly being able to fortify my own affinities, articulate, and extend them. Furthermore, it was soothing like folding laundry—something useful to do besides obsess about the other things I was or wasn't doing. It's not that running a press is

completely selfless, but you're less concerned about yourself when you're involved in such a material way with other people's writing.

And what was the Lost Roads Project?

It was a multimedia project that toured my native state for two years. Forrest videotaped Arkansans reciting poems that they liked and had learned. Folklorist Mike Luster interviewed the featured writers. Another artist engineered them for radio. An Arkansas painter created two large canvas banners that would drop in front of wherever the exhibit hung, because it went up in libraries and courthouses that weren't designed as exhibition spaces. A furniture-maker created a library table that would be sort of a prop, and Deborah Luster did large-format photographs that were obliquely relevant to the letters of Arkansas. A fine press printer printed twenty-one broadsides of post-World War II writers. There was an accompanying book on the history of Arkansas literature. A portfolio box edition of five was also created. I had a good research assistant for the book and for *The Reader's Map of Arkansas*, which annotated the state's literature from the DeSoto Chronicles to the present. The map was a central piece of the project. A graphic designer made the map "read." An Arkansas composer created a twelve-string guitar soundtrack for the exhibit. A folklorist at the University of Arkansas organized the tour. Once he set that up, the project sort of did itself. At the end I gave it to the Berg collection at the New York Public Library. Deborah, her husband, Forrest, and I toured the state for about six weeks collecting material, interviewing people. It was called The Lost Roads Project: a walk-in book of Arkansas. And it was intended to be a vibrant, three-dimensional record of Arkansas literature.

What was the effect of the different media?

People loved it. It was great to go to a modest public library in a small town, and find out that the high school teacher brought her students and had

them do their own maps. Suddenly that place meant something to them besides just somewhere they had to get away from—suddenly it had integrity, history, and gave them some distinction they had heretofore overlooked.

If you had seen that Arkansas project growing up, would you have felt differently about your home state?

Very differently. I thought of doing the project not just out of homesickness, but because one summer Forrest and I went to a little town outside of Little Rock called Sweet Home to write articles on Henry Dumas. Dumas, who was born in the late thirties and raised in Sweet Home, wrote poems and stories and radio plays (all back in print from Thunder's Mouth press). He ended up teaching in Saint Louis, but he came back to Arkansas to do voter registration drives, and for family reunions. When he went to Harlem to be best man in a friend's wedding, he was shot by a subway cop. He was in his thirties. It was hard for us to document much on him in Sweet Home—only his auntie, who had raised him, could talk about him with a clear memory. Every male relative of Henry Dumas', except for one retarded nephew, was either dead or in prison. Sweet Home used to be a farming community—now it's an open drug market. Nothing there but a shabby community center and Wilbur Mills Elementary School. I thought, what would it mean to a young black child to go to this school with the name of a white congressman? Nothing, nada. What would it mean if it were named after Henry Dumas? Well, maybe not much, unless the designation was reinforced, but the naming is a start. It's the Buddhist principle of the rectification of names. You start with the proper nomenclature for what happened that really mattered.

What relationship between consciousness and the physical world do you want your poems to create?

I think of myself as being very much in my language; my reality hinges on

my being able to apprehend the particulars of my language, and being able to respect the contours which somehow don't occlude the contents but uphold its mystery. We are so dependent on media that isn't language-based. It feels as if we could just recycle the same six or eight phrases every day of our lives, but life loses both ichor and nuance without being able to create an exacting description of it. Poets are the ones who can describe the guts of life. We have to use the language so demandingly, just to minimally preserve what makes us human. And you have to practice. Our whole lives can be reductive and redundant and circumscribed; language is one of the few things that moves us outside our daily limits. Language and sex and dreaming.

You've talked about the importance of silences as well.

A late-learned value—all but too late. I haven't learned how to harness space effectively in my poetry. The lacunae are there even if you're working against a wall of sound, you know. There are gaps in everything. What's lineation if it's not about respecting the surrounding space? Is it just an old convention that's outlived its usefulness? But what if the line now has to work against the space it occupies to be useful yet?

Was it something that you learned first in poetry, or generally in life?

I am afraid I learned it in reading poetry before I learned to practice it in speech. If you read Celan or Oppen you start to see how freighted silence can be, as well as how it increases the aperture. So I may have begun to engage silence from reading, but I have entered it cognitively by recognizing the verbal failures in my own life.

Do you feel your poems begin with a place that the speaker speaks out of, or do you start with a voice describing what he or she sees? Or neither?

Neither now, but I think I used to be led by my voice, so that what I had

to learn to do was to rein it so that it didn't overwhelm the other possibilities. I have more range, but it was a very gradual expansion. And the place always matters to me even if it matters only on the surface. The surface interests me. When I go someplace—even if I am tired or screwed up or whatever—I want to see where I am. I read the local paper. I walk around. I find the local call numbers, even if I'm dropped off at some chain motel that's basically nowhere, anywhere, America the Homogenous. I don't like waking up and not knowing where I am.

Since you're so interested in place and voice, I was wondering why you write poetry and not—even additionally—fiction.

An accident. But the more exposure I had to poetry, the more I thought, what else is there? I feel like it's where I put the best of myself, and I'm glad I found someplace where I could feel like I could go for that level of intensity and fury, hope and concentration. It's home. Poetry is a very animate field, actually. Poetry is disparaged, and we disparage ourselves, but I think contemporary American poetry is among the most interesting stuff being written. The best writing with the least readership. It's a confusing field.

But it's a fertile confusion.

A fertile confusion, that's right.

from ONE BIG SELF: PRISONERS OF LOUISIANA

C.D. Wright

Prepare to exit the forest of men and women

Louisiana bumper sticker: Jesus Don't Leave Earth Without Us

It's a great day to die, a great day to leave the body, he told the press
before his Easter execution

When I go, I want my lips smythe-sewn, none of that perfect-bound crap
it doesn't last

And burn me up I don't want any more real estate

No one promised you the light or the morrow

Mother Helen predicts you will be doing better moneywise
between March and May

In your past life you had something to do with animals
She sees you in a hospital with animals way back in the 1800s

After all, you are not Gramsci, she said

Qui facit per alium facit per se

Sounds dirty doesn't it

I wanted to offer you the bread of charity,

Mercy, etc.

When she said she would write the book
he said what direction

Take this down, then burn it

My faulty eschatology pardon my french
The lovebugs hitting the windshield like something electric

Jack and Jill the pastor at St. Gabriel calls them

Wonderful news Sissy has seven little catahoulas
Mr. Redwine in ecstasy

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury,
Is this your true verdict
What say you one and all

Count the nights you lay awake waiting
Count the nights you lay awake wondering
Count the ways you re-wrote the ending

Landing on PRISON or RUIN send the player's piece
Back to begin life over again from Space No. I.

I can't make this right *It is ungetatable*
in the blank space for future plans he wrote *barker*

Fried pickles: another discordant culinary experience

Snake-infested dreams at the heel of the Tunica hills

Shift into absence

Often picture in my mind's eye the light on Sugar Lake
the loft of white pelicans from the cypress stand

None but employee or trusty or fugitive
has seized the sun going down there

See the black curl under my chin
I live on the ground by day and by night. . .
Don't ask

Whom do you see in the mirror

A flick of conscience
before the windows darken in hard vertical lines

It is inenarrable

A trunkful of snake-infested dreams

The grey pelican is the state bird

Her aunt moved from Ruby to Florence
because her house was possessed
Don't ask

The you that you fear
is here

The fear that you fear is everywhere

Emotional collision of taker and taken

Hot water sets blood

Helluva lot easier to kill than pass a bad check

Imagine if it were your son

Badly decomposed

Coffin kept closed

The strapdown team is strictly voluntary
you would be there

An area man tried to describe
the sanctity of being
a state very like happiness

ODI ET AMO don't we all

Hate bracketed by love

Vice versa

AMA guidelines forbid a physician to be a participant

The pavid eyes the gravid set to the jaw of the condemned

see me

hear me

feel me

I go I go at last I go—his face transfiguring

THE EYE MOVED

memory extinguished

let no man remember my name

Mercy Triumphs over Judgment
Easy for some to say

barely imaginable rage unimaginable grief unthinkable deed

No messenger from the czar on a foaming white horse
to return the air to you

Old Fyodor was a real mess after that one

Job applicant in the waiting room said the best way was to
treat them all like a #

That could be a problem, Stupid

That crime which dare not speak its name
(oft confused with unjudicial conduct)

Whoever FIRST arrives at The Mansion of Happiness
WINS THE GAME.

This must be reached by exact spin.

Enters a silence that never reverses itself

What was he reading

i/m preferred not to speak to the press
i/m preferred not to eat with the warden
i/m preferred to see his own pastor
i/m asked that his mother not be present
i/m asked that his eyes be given to another

Today it's going to be hot as blue blazes
And tonight it will be very very warm
Tomorrow it's going to be hot as blue blazes
And tomorrow night it will be very very warm

Tuesday's just as bad

We must rest now; it's going to be a scorcher

Before you know it the sun is coming up and everything is moving clockwise
is your blood headed in the right direction

BLACK IS THE COLOR

Of that big old ugly hole
Of 77% of the inmates in Angola
Of your true love's hair
Of 66% of the inmates at St. Gabriel
Of the executioner's corduroy hood

hung on an ice hook
in the tool shed
away from the kids

Wednesdays were important for Faith
Graduation Day Active Duty Day Death Day

Just to breathe said the mother of Faith the first year an ordeal

It says foot for foot and burn for burn

Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment
as the saint would have it

I know that, and I know *Le ciel est par-dessus le toit,*
Mais apres tout, I'm not Verlaine

Bound her hands with electrical cord, the young mother of 3

Stabbed her, the young mother, 23 times, took her wedding ring

How can that be shriven

White is kitchen; Burnt Pink is night floor technician;
inner yard, Forest Green

The suspect was 9

I said I'm all stirred up

Come nearer
where death hangs on its solitary hook in the shed

Your sentence, not a metonymy for our sins

Me, I'm Catholic so I was born guilty

I've always had the willies

*Today it is hot as blue blazes and tonight it's going to be
very very warm*

*Tomorrow it's going to be hot as blue blazes and tomorrow night
very very warm*

The women pass around a handmirror and a tube of lipstick
they sit on the slab walk, talk and smoke

They pass a stuffed bunny from hand to hand
for their turn in front of the camera

The church ladies are out on soul patrol
they've got ditty bags for the prisoners

Poster: Black History Month, women's prison
The blacker the college
The sweeter the knowledge

Navy is housekeeping,
Khaki is for peer tutor

The search for Molly is forty-five days old

If you were a felon
you'd be home now

Cradle my head Sister

until the last rivet of grief is secure

Why has the field line started so late
Why does the light reproach us
Why is the coffee so watered down
What does it say on your blue sheet
What will you lose if you stay
What is your baby's name

Prison towns prison motels prison movies prison books prison dreams

Voices in the air conditioning

Convict hate convict sweat convict voices in the toilet tank

The cell your dwelling; this grave your garden

Mack trapped a spider
Kept in a pepper jar
He named her Iris
Caught roaches to feed her

He loved Iris
When Iris died
He wrote her a letter

Dear night dear shade dear executioner

Fears: snakes madness falling

The sword has broken over this head

It sure enough gets old
The way we do things

Defend me if you can
Collect my tears if you will

G-o-d is the boss with the sauce
he's too sweet to be sour

He's got his finger on the wrong answer button

The ineffable joys for those who
unfeignedly love, transcend the documentary constraints,
pledge mercy, etc.

After all, you are not Mandelstam

She said she was in love with Aqua Man

Aqua Man?
It's a shower head, Stupid

And that Sister Woman, is what you call safe sex

For whatever it's worth
135,000 take guns to school every day

Sound of that emotional collision
between perps and victims

No condoms for the heart

No one promised you the light or the morrow

DANCE ME LONG IN TALL TALL HEELS

Rebecca Alvarez

counted out that happy polly bird dance
all in the center of the floor
pushed everything away from the walls and leaving
only the faintest traces of slime
and the sparkles that smiled like his Ashley girl.

framed all between your fingers
and i don't need to explain it all
but know it from the bottom looking in,
there's lung and other guts in there too,
i like to go out dancing with you
even the flag seems to be geeking out
at the top of that pole sometimes.

be me that girl and tell me
with the classics sent by mail
do nothing in person but stand
formal and drive like a casual vendor please
please please, sit then stand
then dance me around the room's
fat blue equator line laughing at sitting brazil
and moony taiwan and
long tall and unaccompanied california.

first that yellow in the expensive window
and then i want the orange polka-dot bag to match
and the drink with the never-ending fizz
and the hyperventilating waiter who's in love
with the asthmatic waitress.

pop that paper bag but make sure
i'm not giggling inside of it beforehand.

a slide trumpet, drums with all that dirt on top
and that big primary-colored hall
you always took me to when cars were boxier then
and drinks were presented in the candelabras
and the blue stage lights stayed on
even after everyone went home,
swing me chandelier to conversational chandelier
and baby catch me just before it hit that
lit-up phosphorescent floor.

from THE RECITATION OF FORGETTING

Franck André Jammé

FORDS, CHANNELS

19

In fact, everything happened this way: she told me the days, tossed seeds into oblivion—which sprouted, populated me. The river changed direction. Things returning, ghosts.

20

And I heard: “The heart will hold on. Only it had to allow a kind of splinter, arriving with such force that it was buried: it immediately turned it to stone. Now, against its side, it’s like mother-of-pearl, a frail calyx, pulsing. But does the tree count its fruits?”

21

And I, in turn, saw. The prince was barely emerging from his rough outline, only his head was present. His mind also became more flexible: sometimes it could take the shape of objects, really speak them. But if fear forced the threshold, he turned back into clay, leaned toward his angel: “You’re asleep,” he told him, “not things. Try to wake up. Show yourself, just once, so that I can finally rest.” And the angel didn’t answer, seemed hardly more than a ripple. Yet both of them were the world, its question.

22

Passersby, who were sitting, talking together, so cleverly, brooks that crossed each other in the air. Each one had his own manner, one of them had only one source: "Age of the wolf! Age of the wolf! Thought must act. Our gods are in a daze." And again, he listened.

23

Little ring was rocking back and forth. Then stopped, then started up again. Then stopped. "Stand up," she said. "Remember that the one you're waiting for, who has your face, will come in soon. You're not ready yet and he won't come. But be worthy. At least use your waiting to make the youngest of tigers."

24

Flowers? For another time. All the flowers of sand and of the city. On the windows, in the jet hair of the women, on the necks of those who follow the wooden chariots of the procession. And all the fields: blond squares, the wind, shivers jeweled with white puddles. A thousand insects are swarming, gold sheaves, small steps. Terra nostra!

25

She was breathing, long patience, making the breath pass to the wound. In the bedroom, soon, that smelled good, the harvest—sachets of invisible flour that must have come open, everywhere. And at the last one, passing, slow ship channel, she drank her own poverty.

26

Center of a world within the world, immense field for observing! Down there, the twelve signs ringed the sun, the kettle where the sky assembles shone with its dark heart, the blackest needle indicated lightning there; farther on, the marble chains, so tiny one wondered who they were meant

for; at the back, learned machines, their arms now dislocated. The prince's fears designed an inexplicable dwelling place, with at the center of this center, the endless staircase, which is climbing still and always, and one who sojourned there recalls a night, at the very top, when he believed himself a star among others—and the descent too, the next morning, under terrible applause, in the simple light of dawn.

27

It was strange, she was dreaming, suddenly her eyelids rustled. A few seconds like this and on her night, another night—which soon flew away, without having wakened her. Finally when she shook herself: "Do you remember, you, forgetful you?" The pain was so great, sometimes, that we laughed."

28

What was outside me was beyond the faces, the scenes. Those skies with red tongues, frozen silver, or copper, trying to coat the weightless turquoise. Those lands ringed with brown, speckled in places, with multicolored sheets of rocks and flowers. For a moment, doubt slept.

29

I went above the roofs. Everywhere there was nothing but a lost shock, boiling with blood, forever prostrate with waiting. "Sit, unreal," she said. "Great is the refusal. And great the acceptance. Think of the thread and the pendulum, the winged foot, the confident look, grace—and the murmur of the soothsayers."

30

Highway of the north! Wide, with no traps, bordered with domes for resting beneath, rust-colored and white. And before each one of them the key, the peacock with the spread-out tail, vibrant head, the very large hot-blooded flower. That opened, closed, rustling with blue, ocher and seagreen. Who

spoke only a little: "Man goes to bed, for it's late. He makes the red sun mount under his eyelids, from the east to the zenith; then goes to sleep. Next morning he makes the same star go back down to the west, just as slowly." And: "Night must have a lover, each night, as the moon must—a glow-worm for the shadows. Such is the echo's offering." And the great bird departed, tilting the aigrette of its clan.

31

She said: "You abandon yourself and you observe a few moments of silence. Listen, you're breathing. Sometimes you graze the root—barely, I know, but I've already seen it tremble. There is nothing behind things, there are only things. Which multiply, still, and indefinitely. So?"

32

Road of the east, stony, that climbs and exacts! Up there, the hermit kept watch over the pass, she knew his story. That he came from the northern plateaus, from the country where the eagle's down curls on the hat; that he brought to life the drum skins and the old song. He had stuck out his native tongue at her, one evening: "It's without any support that one utters. Everything comes to pass through enchantment."

33

Believe. Let your body do what it wants. Or for that matter don't believe, it doesn't matter, there are things that are beyond our understanding, that happen like the pulsing of your eyelid, that don't think. Don't think." She placed the stone and the cloud near each other.

34

A man, a woman were passing. And now they stopped, looked at each other, both looked up and pointed, to show the evidence: the bird in the tree, which had just stolen a letter. They stood there a long time, stag's eyes

drawn to the sky, their mouths white. Nothing dared to move any more. One could barely make out an infinitesimal red thread circling their waists—it came and went. Everything, inside, was burning.

35

Sometimes a world approached. Gray and then sienna, and then bluish. The rest gold, blond at the tip. I told myself: behind the monster's forehead the favorable one is sleeping, that child who is not misfortune but is the king. The smoke remained suspended, high in the air.

36

"Drink the living water," she said, "animate the drum. Get your things together too, so that their voices may be heard: the conch shell and the lance, the letters of light. Listen again to what nurses us, the fire and its venom, the pearl that sleeps in the echo. And only then, look at me, walk at last on the glitter. Look me in the eyes for a long time: you'll see, I'll catch fire."

37

"At the very heart of the labyrinth, there are days when desire finally oozes from our fingers. Then one can sink without despair. Dark, O blue flame!" She was like that.

38

The bird that doesn't repeat came, turned around, settled on my hand. It looked into the distance, cleaned its blade. Then it went away again.

—translated from the French by John Ashbery

POSTCARDS

Johannes Göransson

1. Dear Abbey,
I'm covered with snow.
I'm covered with snow.
And it's laying its eggs
in the most embarrassing
parts of my body.

2. Dear Natalie,
To take some sleeping pills
and crawl back
into bed with you.

3. Dear Amanda,
You don't want to die in a city where you can't even live, wrote the German poet who was killed by a car. I could die in this city if a big truck plowed into me. My shoulders would buckle and my breastcage would break.

4. Dear Amy,
Sometimes I think I was a truck in another lifetime—a truck parked on a county road next to a field full of dried scraps of corn. And if you look in the back of it you may think it belongs to a lover because of the broken glass, or a barber because of the shears, or a fool because the letters are torn, or a child because the guns are not loaded. Sometimes I think I was a truck that smashed a ribcage. Sometimes I think I was the ribcage.

5. Dear Mr. Springsteen,

My truck keeps driving off bridges. The animals inside the truck drown. When they haven't called for a few days their parents get nervous and start calling the glue factory. They're worried that their children have thrown away their educations and followed my path—trying to keep things together that should fall apart or trying to stick things together that don't belong together. The parents understand that it's better to burn such garbage or even recycle it and turn it into black rulers for school children who'll grow up to fuck someone they hate in a public bathroom or try to smash their heads against the wall or eat pot because they can't find a goddamned pipe or go skipping down the avenue of asses. That's the life the animals will never know. I'm trying to tell them there's no point in struggling. My truck is stuck on the bottom of the river and nobody has a submarine that goes this far beneath the skin.

6. Dear Screen door,

You're a true joker in a city full of people who hurt me when they try to smile. I have noticed how you imitate my days by standing still. I've seen you imitate my ways by slamming in the wind. I hear you imitate my laughter when I'm trying hard to fall asleep.

7. Dear Mom,

I thought I was in love, but then I found out it was bipolar disorder. Don't ask me how I feel. Put out that cigarette on your thigh.

8. Dear Dad,

I'm fine.

9. Dear Lovely Sunday Morning Coming Down,

I will always remember your porno and your cold coffee.

I will always remember your floor and your bird cage.

PIECES OF INTERIOR AND LANDSCAPE

Alexandria Peary

The contortions of being to be a fugue or canon repeating parts of itself and forcing its sensations into premeditated shapes, such that a tree in an orange field is surprising, the three dimensions of a tree: its shafts, algae string, and three-toned bark after rain. The rain scribbled on the exterior woodwork of the tree, built into the humid green squares of July, and on the sides of the green shingled house recently lined with the scent of spring cleaning and on the shed, & the small mail box filled with lichen. A thick purple house paint of rain, a commercial eggplant graffiti, going over and over the same spot, starting in no particular moment to produce license, chamomile, great throbbing red roses. New aphids climb the wiring and ragged patterns of the recording equipment. The whole selection is repeated, including the sky blue patches of recent understanding, puddles, the crosshatched areas in which peace and confusion pollinate, the above-mentioned tree, the ATM set in a blue distance, the love letter with its string of words meant to orchestrate a touch, a certain look in the afternoon behind a lace and khaki curtain. Tomato plants line the window seat. The gorgeous blaring radios of the tomato plants. A new crop of yellow portable

radios touched in spots by potting soil, the leaves
stitched with an androgynous cologne.

They occupy the one seat in the beige room, and knock
out the view. There is nothing to see out the window.

Each at a different station, they broadcast pink, fleshy cones.

They skip, erase, dot, announce, and hum.

A polka in stripes, the zinc bars of two operas, a lyric
in pieces, a song like a stack of soup cans.

A pile of pick-up sticks brightly dumped on the floor.

And the wind picks up its invisible bars: What
did you say? What did you say? and the perennial
touches the annual—a yellow apple in the crotch
of a tree—another tree and its love graffiti

from FROM A BROKEN BOTTLE TRACES OF PERFUME STILL EMANATE, VOLUME FOUR

Nathaniel Mackey

20.XI.82

Dear Angel of Dust,

I dreamt last night I was back in a place I'd once been in. It's a dream I keep having, a dream I can't keep from having. I knew it was the same dream even though the setting wasn't the same. Without having the same look it had the same feel. Nor did the people look at all like the people I'd dreamt of before, let alone like the people who'd been in this place when I was actually there. Still, I knew it was a place I'd once been in I was dreaming about, knew the dream I was dreaming was again the dream I'd often had before. I knew this even though so little about it seemed the same. Mostly what I felt, how I felt, made it the same. I felt a sense of arrival, almost of never having left. Though the woman who drew me there mixed intimacy with distance, intimate yet immune, never again to be caught out, I had a sense of belonging, of being back where I belonged. I'd gotten there soon after she'd woken up. We sat in her living room, talking. "I was afraid I'd never see you again," she said. And then, abruptly, "We're not the same." Just as abruptly the room filled with people, none of whom was anyone I knew or had ever seen. A party had been planned and this was it, though not, I found, a party for me. Even so, the sense of being back where I belonged persisted. Everyone milled around, standing or sitting, talking in groups of two, three, four and five. Talk of the woman who'd drawn me there was on everyone's lips—so

much so it was as though she wasn't there. No two groups referred to her by the same name and none of the names any of them used was the one I knew her by, but I nonetheless knew it was about her they were all talking. This was finally confirmed when a man came thru the door referring to her by the name I knew her by, at which point I left the room in search of a bathroom down the hall. The hallway, however, led not to a bathroom but to a small pinball arcade and, from there, to what appeared to be the entrance to a theater. Walking thru that entrance, I ended up, as the dream inconsequentially ended, out on the sidewalk of a busy street.

I woke up upset, unable to get back to sleep, bothered to be put upon again by something I'd long since been done with, long since put away. Presumably put away I suppose I should say, for the dream seems intent on calling closure premature, presumptuous even. A fiction so wishful and so entrenched it could afford to dispense with its usual trappings, it all but gloated, leaving it to me to see thru its disguise. That I so easily did helped it make its point. I lay awake thinking about this afterwards, unable to get back to sleep, convinced the dream had come to confirm Drennette's ambiguous equation, her cloudy confounding of "dream" and "thief." Yes, a dream can at once debunk and prolong its own wish, I had to agree, steal from itself as it replenishes itself. Yes, I had no choice but to continue, it disrupts ostensible contentment by insisting on lack, a dream in two senses (what's wanted, what can't be had), looter and loot, a thin, if any, line between. Yes, I continued, unable to stop, it invites and discourages in a single sweep, offers and refuses at the same time. This went on, me unable to stop, for quite a while.

It turned out to be a long night, but it got me closer to getting the piece written I wrote you about a few letters back. The sense of grudging receipt I've been after, I came to see, not only has something to learn from the dream's concatenation of theft and recognition but would better be served by brass than by saxophone. Call it brass epiphany. I listened a couple of

times to Henry Threadgill's new album *When Was That?*, the one with his new group, the seven-member sextet. Craig Harris and Olu Dara did it, the latter's cornet work in particular, that cracked or cut-into whimsy or wisp of a sound he so often gets. A bird with cracked wings, it reconnoiters and reconceives the music's bugle-corps roots, a militarist call it shades with misgiving, mystic affliction, oddly beguiled and soliloquistic but leading the charge. A feel for confronting long odds (one of the tunes is called "10 to 1") sustains a sense that its apparent play on cavalry and calvary might amount to more than play. It's as though a bitter medicine puckered his mouth, a stiff portion of rescue and duress meted out as one. That, I decided, is what I want for the piece I've been thinking about. It sent me back to my trumpet, which, it made me realize, I tend to neglect.

The intimate-immune reception the dream subjected me to also bears on the piece. Grudging receipt, the dream seems keen on announcing, borders on gnostic receipt, a resolute wish to wake up, gnostic resolve not to be caught out. "Reverie's Reveille" is the title I'm toying with.

As ever,

N.

Dear Angel of Dust,

Yes, the balloon I saw the night I sat in with the Crossroads Choir, the balloon the audience batted about while I played, no doubt can be said to have anticipated the comic-strip balloons we've been visited by. I haven't wanted to go down that road, really, but you bring it up and it's all I can do to keep the rush of recollection and reflection in check. The sense or sensation I had that my breath had been taken away, literally sucked away by and bound up in the balloon I saw rising toward the ceiling, is one I'll never forget. It was an impossibly sustained or extended sense of breath as inescapably bated, subject as such to sudden increase, quantum increase, quantum hyper-anticipatory inflation. As a child I thought it was "baited" people were saying when they spoke of bated breath and such was the sense I had as I watched the balloon rise toward the ceiling, a sense of the breath it bound as anticipant no matter how much one struggled to the contrary, hooked. The balloon, empty of all but air but endlessly inviting even so, was bait and bound breath rolled into one.

The other side of it was that, depleted, breath spirited away, I availed myself, it seemed, of someone else's lungs, someone else's breathing. Someone stepped in, stood where I stood, notwithstanding I stood there still. Breath Ex Machina I'd call that someone, except the mechanicality putting it so implies fails to do what I sensed or seemed inhabited by justice. Someone momentarily spelled me, stood in my place as the balloon bore my breath away. Breath Absconditus I'd call the balloon, except it didn't entirely bear my breath away. Understudy, stand-in, second wind (call it what you will), the someone who stepped in drew breath from it, a cardiognostic lung, it seemed, upwardly displaced. I was afraid I'd pass out but it quickly came back down, alighted like a bird inside my ribcage, ensconced, I couldn't help feeling, for all time. I was both cheered and chastened to know that

something or someone I couldn't claim to be me had come forth to curtain crisis, something more syncopal than sheer continuance, cardiognostic wind and wing rolled into one more than mere persistence.

The balloon's rise rode my sunken heart. Held in reserve, breath held on high buoyed me up, made my recourse to problematic romance pan out. A subterranean bubble the balloon struck me as having once been. It had risen like gas, a chthonic belch given off by realignments taking place underground. Such realignments gave lost love a seismic stage, a geologic if not cosmic theater and thrust monitoring would-be redemptive history from afar—inward, intimate and one's own yet oddly remote. Rift and realignment amended bedrock truth. Balloon binding bespoke loose (albeit bedrock) truth, elastic truth, a seismic stretch or substratum my sunken heart sought to rise up from. Loose truth's advocate or avatar it was. "Only One" was its cardiognostic disguise.

I could say more but, as they say, don't get me started. . . .

As ever,

N.

Dear Angel of Dust,

Lambert dropped in unexpectedly earlier today. He showed up at the door carrying a record and said there was something he wanted me to hear, something on the record which if I hadn't already heard I had to hear and which if I had I had to hear again, something I needed to listen to, something I would learn from. It was an Art Blakey album. What he wanted me to hear, he said, would make me give my new commitment to brass a second thought. (My "conversion to brass" he went so far as to call it, getting back to the bone he began to pick a few weeks ago.) The record was *Free for All*. It's one I'd already heard and in fact have in my collection. When I told him so he handed me the record anyway, saying that he too had mistakenly thought he'd already heard it, that after listening to it for years he truly heard it only today, that that was what had caused him to come right over. He insisted I put it on and sit down and listen, saying what he wanted me to hear was the second cut on side two, "Pensativa." I took the record out of the jacket and put it on the turntable. I set the needle on "Pensativa." We sat down to listen.

Free for All is a record I've listened to countless times. "Pensativa," in fact, is my favorite cut. I've listened to it more than to any of the others. Even so, I sat patiently and listened yet again, curious as to what the something was Lambert wanted me to hear, the something he seemed to insist I hadn't already heard and couldn't hear without his help. Again I heard Freddie Hubbard's quickly heraldic opening over trombone and tenor support, Art's quickly established Latin accent as Freddie goes on to state the rest of the head. Again I heard the less heraldic, more confidential vein in which he does so, the cooing restraint he draws out the melody with. I heard the trombone and tenor's choirboy whimsy yet again, the background embellishment and the low-key corroboration they allot, the lowing intent or

insinuation they supply or ply the melody with. I wondered yet again how the piece can so border on show-tune cheer yet be so hip, mingle moments flirting with soap-commercial ditty with streetwise aplomb. I listened again to Curtis Fuller briefly come to the fore, taking the lead voice away from Freddie only to almost immediately give it back. I listened again to Freddie come back to the fore and float briefly atop what bordered on soap-commercial ditty before restating the head and beginning to solo.

For someone who made a special point of me hearing this cut, someone who had shown up unexpectedly insisting I play it, Lambert showed little response when it began to play. His face turned expressionless as he sat listening, a placid mask offering no sign that the music had any meaning for him at all. He seemed at best, in fact, to be merely bearing with it. Throughout the opening statement and restatement of the theme he fidgeted once or twice but he wasn't otherwise demonstrative at all. Lambert's lack of response notwithstanding, I listened as intently as I'd ever listened. The short swirl of a leap and the sonic skid Freddie opens his solo with spoke to me as much as they ever had. So too did the rapid-fire polish alternating with a prancing way of placing notes he has recourse to as the solo unfolds, Cedar Walton's guajira-conversant comping underneath. Yet again I heard a contrastive dilation bordering on blare posed against intermittent, synaesthetic lip-twist, a synaesthetic sip and kiss rolled into one.

Lambert became a bit more expressive as Freddie soloed, all but undetectably so. With each intermittent, synaesthetic lip-twist he all but imperceptibly rolled his eyes, all but imperceptibly grew impatient with the lush articulatory Freddie resorted to. He all but imperceptibly seemed to say come off it. "All but imperceptibly," however, ceased to apply when Wayne Shorter began to solo, Lambert's response to which was decidedly more evident than to everything that had come before. Wayne's far-away reticence, the reluctant, trudged-all-this-way-to-say-this way he begins, following Freddie's bugling, crescendoing exit, foil to said exit, visibly lit Lambert up. His apparent

nonchalance, the I'd-rather-be-elsewhere offhandedness one hears despite a slightly nasal touch, the burgeoning build of a lazy, elongated yawn, had Lambert up on his feet almost at once—up on his feet, head cocked, eyes closed, snapping his fingers. He snapped his fingers so emphatically I was afraid he'd break them, slowly pacing the floor all the while. Where Art reacts to Wayne's low-register shudders by saying, "Blow your horn," he too, pacing, said, "Blow your horn." Where Art reacts to Wayne's tilted, nasal quizzicality by saying, "All right," he too, pacing, said, "All right."

Over the years I've listened to Wayne's solo countless times. I can't say I stood up and joined Lambert, snapping my fingers, head cocked, eyes closed, pacing slowly, echoing Art's exhortations, but it's one of my all-time favorites when it comes to getting a lot said in a short span of time. I've repeatedly marveled, over the years, at the terse way Wayne has with tangibility, the expansive economics he exacts nonetheless. The retrospect epiphany he makes of the theme not long before fading, an eyebrow-raising tack seeming to say alas or to sound alarm, has always killed me. This was no less the case but indeed more so as I sat listening, blown away by the intervalllic dilation titrating dismay he applies to the theme, reroutes it thru. Nothing could have spoken to me more than Wayne's solo, notwithstanding I didn't stand up and join Lambert. In my own way, a less demonstrative way, I was into it as much as he was.

Lambert made a show of being into it to make a point, to further pick the bone he began to pick a few weeks back. He lifted the tone arm off the record when Wayne's solo was over, cutting Cedar Walton's solo off just as it began. He then went into a spiel as to how unbelievable Wayne's playing was, a spiel I had no problem nodding my head in agreement with. I did have a problem, though, when he went on to put Freddie down and to make it a question of saxophone versus trumpet, reed against brass. He dared me to abandon (as he put it) the saxophone after listening to Wayne's solo, saying that only, as far as he was concerned, a madman could. He went on

about what he decried as brass bombast at one end and irrelevant cuteness or slickness at the other, pinning it all on Freddie's solo, a solo he took to typify the trumpet's faults or failings, its inferiority to a saxophone prowess epitomized by Wayne.

It was Lambert at his most vociferous, albeit not untouched by an ironizing inflection here and there that seemed to say the point was to get what was to be gotten from skirmishing or scrimmaging for its own sake. Whether that was the case or the case was he was in dead earnest made me no difference. I couldn't get into it, wasn't in the mood. Listening to "Pensativa" after not having done so for so long had me feeling such disputation was moot. I tersely, quietly and a bit wearily said it was a matter of apples and oranges, to which Lambert replied that was exactly his point, one has to make a choice.

I couldn't get into it, wasn't in the mood to press it further. Instead, I got up, took *Free for All* off the turntable, went to the record shelves, pulled volume one of Freddie's *The Night of the Cookers* out, put it on the turntable, set the needle down on the cut that takes up side one, "Pensativa," and sat back down, asking Lambert to do the same. The date's a live session recorded at Club La Marchal in Brooklyn, with Lee Morgan also on trumpet, James Spaulding on alto and flute, Harold Mabern Jr. on piano, Larry Ridley on bass, Pete La Roca on drums and Big Black on conga. James Spaulding plays a bit of flute during the statement of the theme on "Pensativa" and Harold Mabern Jr. takes a short solo, but the piece is really a showcase for trumpet, an extended foray throughout most of whose twenty-two minutes Freddie and Lee go back and forth. "Brass Madness" it could've been called. After about ten minutes Lambert got up and left.

Yours,

N.

THE TOOTH FAIRY LEAVES A GIFT FOR A TOURMALINE MINING DISASTER

Arielle Greenberg

To die by fire takes only a slip of paper,
a tool to make a life from a fortune,
one simple traitor to make a million from a mine.

To burn requires only a back on which to woozy and
sweat that tastes more of crush than meat
so the arson can be fueled by brine.

Two human dogs meet on a rural route.
Both are missing teeth. Both lie.

The engineer says to the hunchback,
"Shoot, I didn't know this marrow was yours!"

It's okay. They're neighbors.
They each live on the other side of the graveyard of pilgrims
that sticks up like molars surrounded by a chain-link fence
for its own protection from time.

The hours have collapsed inwards and died.
No one lives on the *other* other side.
That house is all shuttered up,
its blues and golds and pinks mostly stripped

so that when the arsonist comes
to deliver his holy package of ends,
nothing mutters or brings the flaming gift in from the step.

This town is no place for woodland creatures.
It's the shortest two words in the manual: "we wept."

CONTRIBUTORS

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SAMUEL PEPYS (1633-1703) was an English public official and celebrated diarist. He left his library, including his diary in cipher, to his nephew John Jackson, and in turn to Magdalene College, Cambridge. The diary, partially deciphered and first published in 1825, extends from Jan. 1, 1660, to May 31, 1669, when failing eyesight forced him to stop writing.

PETER RICHARDS lives in Somerville, Massachusetts.

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JACK SPICER (1925-1965) was a leading figure in the San Francisco Renaissance. Among his many books are *One Night Stand and Other Poems* and *The Collected Books of Jack Spicer*.

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HENRY VAUGHAN (1621-1695) was born in Breconshire, Wales. His major, lasting work, *Silex Scintillans*, was published in 1650.

DAVID WIDGER is an editor for Project Gutenberg, a website dedicated to providing the complete texts of out-of-print books (www.gutenberg.net). About *Editor's Bookmarks* he writes: "For the several years I have produced books for Project Gutenberg, I have been noting short phrases from the texts that I would like to remember and probably would not unless I wrote them down."

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